Marxism Today

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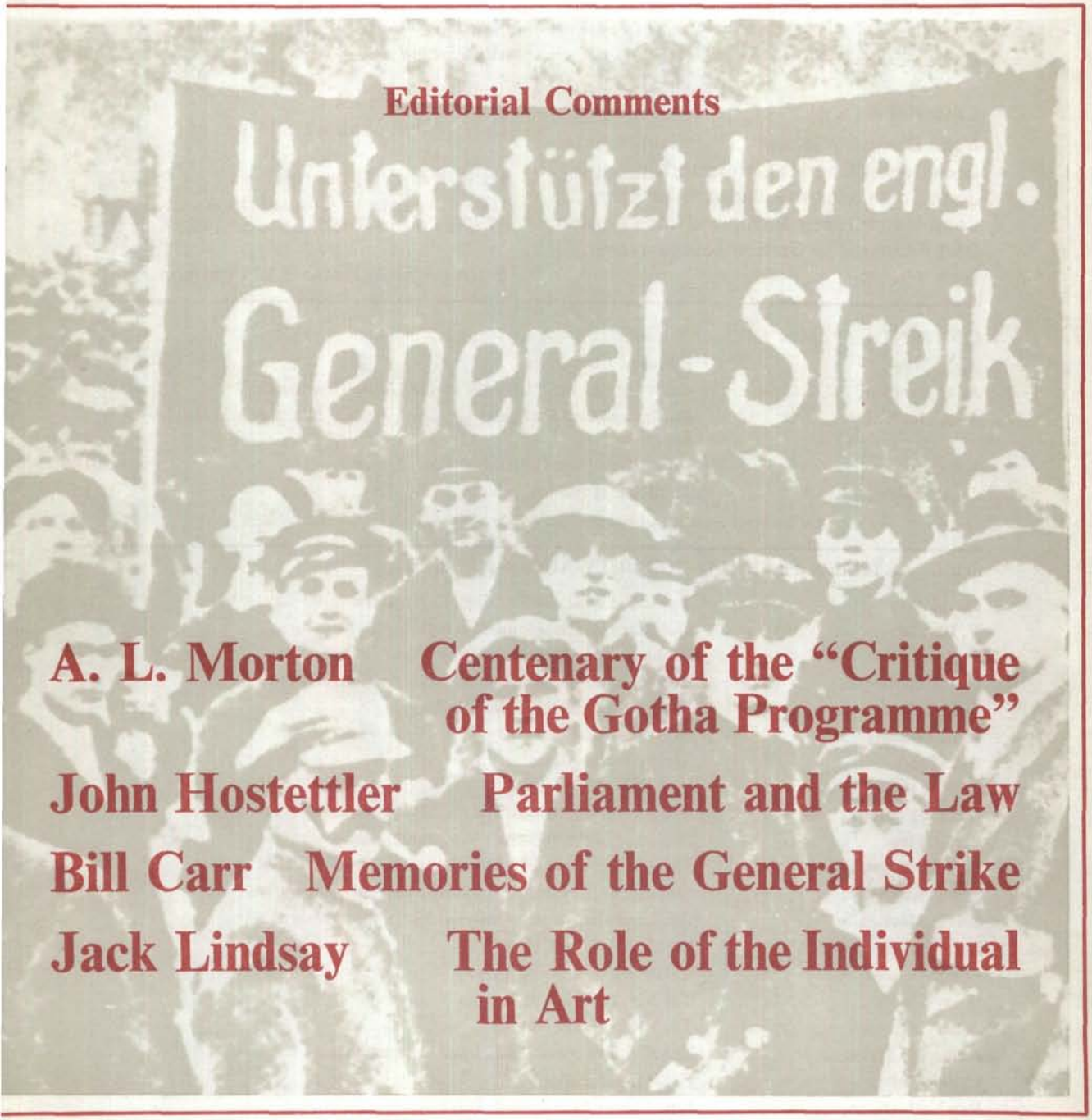

Editorial Comments

A. L. Morton — Centenary of the "Critique of the Gotha Programme"

John Hostettler — Parliament and the Law

Bill Carr — Memories of the General Strike

Jack Lindsay — The Role of the Individual in Art

erman workers support the British General Strike, Hamburg 1926 *(Photograph of the Museum of German History, Berlin, G.D.R.)*

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Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Volume 19, Number 5

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Editorial Correspondence
James Klugmann, 16 King Street, WC2E 8HY

Advertisements
Doris Allison, above address

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Editorial Comments

AN extremely important Declaration was issued by the Executive of the African National Congress (South Africa) after its meeting at Morogoro in Tanzania on March 17-20 this year.

The ANC(SA) expressed the conviction that the time had come to mobilise all forces in Africa and the world "to crown the victories of the peoples of the former Portuguese colonies with a massive and concentrated onslaught on the Pretoria regime."

In the view of the ANC, a new situation had emerged in Southern Africa. Portuguese colonialism had collapsed. The struggle for liberation in Namibia and Zimbabwe had reached new heights. In South Africa itself the level of confrontation between the oppressed and the oppressors was at its sharpest for a decade. Conditions had arisen in which "the African National Congress, the whole liberation movement and all the oppressed people of our country, should seize the initiative into their hands for the capture of power."

In this situation "world imperialism, led by the USA, together with its South African outpost, has studied and prepared for this situation with great care. They have decided that unless they recapture the initiative, white majority domination faces immediate doom".

IMPERIALIST STRATEGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

There is a concerted imperialist manoeuvre, in the opinion of the ANC(SA), to improve the image and international prestige of the South African racist regime, which "is seeking to project itself as a vehicle of progressive change in South and Southern Africa."

Yet, in fact, this remains fascist, racist and colonialist. It has doubled its military budget in the current financial year; it has intensified its Bantustan programme of so-called separate development. At the same time it:—

> "has further reactivated a programme that it adopted in the years when Africa was gaining independence. That was a programme for the recolonisation of Africa, based simultaneously on the threat to use, and the actual use of force against independent Africa and the offer of economic bribes to the independent African states, drawing on huge funds accumulated from the sweated labour of the black people of South Africa."

In this same period, the ANC(SA) warns, some independent African States are championing the cause of what in effect is collaboration with counter-revolution. They have "joined in a veritable scramble to establish and consolidate diplomatic, political and economic links with the colonial regime of South Africa"; they have joined the racist regime in a programme to dismember the African people of South Africa into tribal groups; they are "substituting themselves for the authentic leaders of our people, Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Tambo and others in the solution of the South African problem. Consciously or unconsciously, they are co-operating in a manoeuvre to render irrelevant and destroy the organisation which these patriots lead, namely the African National Congress...."

SOLIDARITY ESSENTIAL

Such conduct, the Declaration continues, strengthens the hand of world imperialism. The future of the whole African continent is at stake:

> "South African and world imperialism are engaged in a gigantic manoeuvre to roll back the march of freedom in Africa. This situation demands immediate, decisive and principled action by the African National Congress, the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations and the world-wide movement of solidarity with our struggling people, unequivocally to beat back the enemy's counter-offensive."

The ANC(SA) calls on the OAU and international community to:—

—recognise the African National Congress of South Africa as an authentic representative of the struggling people of South Africa and as spokesman of its people as a whole.

—re-affirm the OAU condemnation and rejection of the Bantustan policy.

—re-affirm its adherence to total, diplomatic, political, economic, cultural and military isolation of the Pretoria regime.

—re-affirm the recognition of the legitimacy of the armed struggle and call on all member states to "help increase the striking power of our Liberation Movement in pursuit of the struggle for the seizure of power in South Africa."

—declare the Pretoria regime a product of colonial conquest, whose independence,

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sovereignty and United Nations membership constitutes a violation of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and "call on Member States to intensify their efforts towards its immediate expulsion from the United Nations."

ADVANCING FORCES OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

In his Report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy prepared last December in preparation for the 14th CPI Congress, Enrico Berlinguer raised very sharply the significance of the advancing process of struggle of the peoples of what is often called the Third World.

He wrote of the 14 Socialist States whose territory covered one third of the world's surface with a population of 1,200 million people and of the economic and political weight and power of the Soviet Union which "stands as a guarantee that imperialism can no longer operate as it once did, intervening at will on the chessboard of world politics."

Within this picture, he wrote:—

> "the salient feature is the great historical process of advancement and liberation of all the peoples and countries once subjected to colonial domination and dependence: a process that today conditions world history. These are peoples and countries that for long years remained, as Lenin said, the 'object of the international policies of imperialism', and, therefore, at least in part, 'outside historical progress'. The statistics alone are impressive: today there are 1,150 million inhabitants in the developed countries and 2,875 million in the under-developed countries; but in 25 years time, in the year 2000, the first group of countries will have 1,500 million inhabitants, and the second, 5,000 million."

This process, which has been going on for the last 30 years, continues Berlinguer, has now burst forth in full force. The policies of neo-colonialism are being shaken to the core. Of course it would be wrong to consider this group of countries and peoples, commonly referred to as the "Third World", as a homogeneous whole. The process is highly complicated. But:—

> "what is common to this whole area of the world, however, is the irrepressible pressure of hundreds of millions of people, of scores of nations, to break out of a no longer tolerable condition of under-development and indigence and subjection."

EFFECT ON THE MAIN CENTRES OF CAPITALISM

The rise of new peoples and countries, wrote Berlinguer, sharpens the crisis in the "models of capitalist development" (i.e. the "Western" way of life and production) and shakes them to their foundations. Their typical development has only been made possible by the availability of vast resources at low cost, that is to say by the exploitation of the peoples under the imperialist yoke, alongside the exploitation of the working class and working people in the capitalist countries themselves.

Some scholars, including some of progressive and Marxist orientation, continues Berlinguer, maintain that the current crisis is primarily due to the explosion of contradictions inherent in the mechanisms of accumulation, exchange, production and consumption of contemporary capitalism, or to the new obstacles to development raised by the problems of limited resources or pollution of the environment. These contradictions and obstacles are a reality:—

> "But if they have today assumed such an acute nature, it is also and primarily because the whole capitalist world is increasingly feeling the effects of the change in global economic and political equilibrium, brought on by the shift in the correlation of forces in favour of the socialist countries and by the tumultuous movement of the Third World countries."

In fact, he explains, the two aspects are inseparable, and this is plain to all who understand how the developed capitalist countries built up their power positions in the world and constructed their internal wealth:

> "It is, therefore, all the systems, including the political and power systems, on which the bourgeoisies in the big imperialist countries have been able to found a complex organisation of alliances and consensus among vast social strata, co-opting important, and in some countries decisive, parts of the proletariat itself (the 'working-class aristocracies'), that are being undermined."

For this reason, Berlinguer concludes, we must emphasise the explosive nature of that "external" factor represented by the vigour and breadth now achieved by the pressure for liberation from imperialism of hundreds of millions of people, scores of nations and entire continents.

The whole Report has now been translated into English.[1] Since then the 14th Congress has been held. We hope to publish substantial sections of Enrico Berlinguer's Report to the Congress and of his Reply to the Discussion, dealing above all with the situation in Italy, in a subsequent issue of *Marxism Today*.

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[1] Enrico Berlinguer—*Report to the Central Committee in Preparation for the 14th National Congress of the CPI* in *The Italian Communist*, Foreign Bulletin of the CPI, Nos. 5-6, Special Issue, 1974.

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DEVELOPMENT AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT: A MARXIST ANALYSIS

Geoffrey Kay's book under this title, a somewhat surprising product of the Macmillan Press (and a characteristically highly priced one—£7.50 for under 200 pages), is a rather curious work of mixed attractions which does not altogether live up to its title. One might expect it from its title to be devoted to the problems of the underdeveloped countries in their relation to monopoly capitalism and imperialism. This it only incidentally is—and somewhat tantalisingly so, since when it appears to be coming to grips with these problems, in a concrete manner, it is apt to sheer off into abstraction. Already in the Preface one meets the arresting declaration that "capital created underdevelopment, not because it exploited the underdeveloped world, but because it did not exploit it enough"; but this paradox is never really substantiated except indirectly (and abstractly).

It is certainly an intelligently written and knowledgeable book, which has *inter alia* a goodish bibliography. To begin with some interesting things are said (at a general level) about the contrasted roles of merchant capital and industrial capital (the former playing a special role in underdevelopment).

There are some chapters of fairly lucid and acute exposition (if occasionally a trifle laboured and drawn-out) of Marxist economic theory: for example, about the transformation problem and the significance of different rates of turnover of capital. The former is illustrated by exchange between different departments or sectors, and then a bit surprisingly applied to international trade between *countries* as prelude to an argument with Arghiri Emmanuel and his theory of "unequal exchange" (between developed and underdeveloped countries).

Analysis of capital turnover is basis for what is called the "acceleration of capital", which is said to characterise the modern phase of 20th century capitalism ushered in by Henry Ford; this latter, after the crisis of the '30s, uniting with Keynesianism to effect the so-called "recomposition of capitalism" ("the recomposition of capital after 1945 can be expressed in terms of two individuals and their work—Ford and Keynes"). This is thought-provoking and worthy of discussion; but unfortunately it is marred by a somewhat negative and sectarian approach to major questions, at least by implication.

In underdeveloped countries he will allow no progressive function to colonial nationalism, whose historical role has been (apart from China) to promote the hold of industrial capital in the countries concerned ("as the social democratic movement in Europe was incorporated into the strategy of capitalist renovation in the developed countries, so the nationalist movements promoted it in the underdeveloped world"). Not only social democratic parties in Europe but also trade unions have become instruments of the "recomposition of capitalism"; and one starts to wonder what one is left with when one reads in the conclusion that capitalism in its recomposing phase has "outflanked early revolutionary movements and incorporated key working class institutions into the apparatus of the state, (and) it has planned the class struggle itself".

The author even goes out of his way (quoting the Maoist-inclined pessimism of Bettelheim) to encourage doubt whether "socialism which certainly overcomes the traditional private property relations of capitalism, necessarily undermine(s) the productive relations of capitalism." "Is it not possible", he asks, "for these productive relations to survive even the seizure of state power by the proletariat and reproduce themselves within the framework of the new form? . . . To put it in a nutshell: is socialism now the highest form of capitalism?"

One is left wondering how much of this initially promising work is Anarchism rather than Marxism.

ANIMAL NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE

William Thorpe, FRS, Professor of Animal Behaviour in the University of Cambridge, is well known and respected as the pioneer of the new science of ethology—animal behaviour *in the wild*—not in the laboratory or in captivity.

Thorpe has three aims in this book[2] which turn out to be not entirely compatible. First, on the basis of his own wide knowledge and unique researches, especially in bird song, he wants to establish a much higher level of animal behaviour than is generally accepted. He wants to find a variety, a complexity, and an intelligence that goes beyond instinct or the conditioned reflex. His own first hand observation reveals a mass of evidence to

[2] W. H. Thorpe—Animal Nature and Human Nature, Methuen, £7.20.

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support this; perhaps the best examples being the complicated constructional nest making of the Weaver Bird and the teaching of the ape Washoe a large number of signals used in the American Deaf and Dumb method of communication.

His second aim is to assert the uniqueness of man in the face of current attempts to regard him as no more than a naked ape and a particularly unpleasant one. His argument is that this is simply a matter of degree—"more is different". His third is to question the innate combativeness and aggression of *Homo Sapiens*.

His difficulty is to establish the intelligence of animals on the high level he suggests without closing the gap between animals and men. Here he would profit by having a look at Engels on *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, where we find a much more satisfactory understanding of the tool and its use than in Thorpe's account. Tools change the environment by the developments of technology, and on this basis civilisation appears. Apes have not modified their world in the slightest degree and scores of millions of years. No ape has ever created a culture.

Again on language he would see the Washoe ape in a different perspective if he knew more of modern linguistics which sees language as going far beyond signals, even if two or three are united to give some complexity of meaning. Words can mean so many different things in different contexts even among three year olds. No ape ever comes within the range of problem solving and richness of speech of a four year old child. Most observers see its capacity as equal to that of a two year old or younger.

Nevertheless a fine spirited, vigorously original and highly informative book by a man who does want to see man as *different* and not degraded to the level of the sub-human.

ABOUT BEHAVIOURISM

Professor Skinner's "*About Behaviourism*"[3] is a defence of his earlier book "*Beyond Freedom and Dignity*", which endeavoured to show that all human behaviour was of the nature of those reactions to the environment which had met with satisfaction, either naturally or by *devised reinforcements*, i.e. *arranged* satisfactions. On this basis we can control people's behaviour in any way we choose by seeing that some pleasurable experience invariably follows the trend of response to a situation of which we approve. Skinner's aim is to persuade us that mental events have nothing to do with behaviour, or are so doubtful, subjective and undependable as to be negligible. He says:

> "A person is not an originating agent: he is a locus, a point at which many genetic and environmental conditions come together in a joint effect."

Since these and these only are the determinates of human behaviour argument, discussion, persuasion and education are futile, environmental reinforcement rather than the person himself as an initiating, creative agent is what we must use to control people.

It has been frequently pointed out that in neither of his books does Skinner give one instance of how this control has been used. His claim to be able to control human behaviour is wholly without empirical verification. He does not adduce a shred of evidence to support it. Even more remarkable is the fact that the publication of both his books refutes his argument; for what are they but attempts to persuade us, to convince us by reasoning that his theories are correct—the chief of these theories being that persuasion is ineffective and the only effective way of getting us to accept his theories would be to reward us whenever we agreed with him and give us a painful shock whenever we expressed disagreement.

This is not to say that environment is of negligible importance, but the old dilemma about environmentalisation has always been that if the conditioning effect of the social environment determines our thinking then it demonstrates the impossibility of altering it, unless the conditioner is outside the system. That always appears to be the assumption. Skinner is only the conditioner, the manipulator, and we are invited to join him and condition our inferiors; but this assumes that we can divest ourselves of all that society has impressed upon us, saturated us with, conditioned us to accept.

What never occurs to those who think in this way is that historically the whole of history has been nothing but the story of man making and then changing; re-making his environment. Man is not the *object* of social pressures and no more, but the *subject* and master of his social world. Skinner should read a little Marx.

[3] B. F. Skinner—*About Behaviourism*, Cape, £3.50.

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THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

The Victorian novel is a part of our heritage and a television adaptation like the current *David Copperfield* shows that the heritage is by no means dead and buried. As millions of people respond anew (with sympathy or irritation but never indifference) to the story of David and Dora, it's useful as well as interesting to enquire into the basis of the nineteenth-century novel's power to grasp and hold the popular imagination. Is (and was) *David Copperfield* just an escape, a way of passing the time innocuously, another corrupting aspect of bourgeois ideology, or are the roots of Dickens' power relevant to the whole problem of building a popular culture such as socialists wish to see?

A new book that bears the title *The Realist Novel in England: a study in development* (Macmillan) might be expected to throw some light—historical and/or theoretical—on such problems. But unfortunately Ioan Williams doesn't approach his subject with even the minimum of social insight or concern. This is a thoroughly academic work in the sense that makes the word suspect to non-academics.

It does have the virtue of considering the Victorian novel in relation to other Victorian writing of a non-fictional kind—Carlyle, Ruskin, the Christian Socialists—thus making it less easy to switch the question into a realm called 'pure aesthetics'; but even this is done in an abstract way and the whole emphasis is on the sphere of ideas, almost unrelated to actual human struggles and problems. So that from a book which is clearly the product of serious thought and reading (and costs, incidentally, £7.00 for some two hundred pages) the non-specialist reader is likely to receive, alas, little that is truly enlightening or stimulating about the problem of what made the Victorian novel so formidable a force and little that is likely to help clarify the knotty questions involved in the literary theory of "Realism". A pity.

LAWRENCE & WISHART: NEW AND FORTHCOMING

Lawrence & Wishart have recently published four books of considerable—though diverse—interest.

First to mention is the sixth enlarged edition of Allen Hutt's famous short history of the trade union movement—*British Trade Unionism*[1]. The fact that it has run into six editions since the war is evidence of its value to our movement. And as the years have passed Allen Hutt added new chapters to bring it up to date. This edition, compiled after his death, brings the history right up to the end of last year, in a chapter added by John Gollan and entitled "From 'Consensus' to 'Confrontation'".

Next come two books, both in paperback, from socialist countries—from the German Democratic Republic the fascinating *Brecht as They Knew Him*, by a number of eminent authors (£1.00); and from Hungary, *Culture and Socialist Democracy*, by Georgi Aczel (£1.00). The author is a leading figure in the Hungarian Communist Party and in the government, and sets forth the aims and practical methods of building a culture at once militantly socialist and tolerant.

Again, on the "culture" front, comes a volume of the writings of the Marxist literary critic Alick West—*Crisis and Criticism, and Literary Essays* (hardback £4.00). This contains the long-out-of-print book which was a seminal Marxist work of the 'thirties, "Crisis and Criticism", together with more recent essays on Defoe, Bunyan, Jonathan Swift and D. H. Lawrence among others.

Coming soon is a profusely illustrated book on *The Planning of Cities*, by W. Houghton Evans. This will be the first major Marxist work published in English on the problems of city planning.

[1] Lawrence & Wishart, hardback £4.00, paperback £1.50.

(*Completed from p. 160*)

drawings, despite the agonised protests of dealers, because he felt that such egoist intrusion of the artist helped to nullify the sensibility of the work, its popular basis. The absence of his signature would not by itself create the popular sensibility of the work, but given that sensibility it becomes a natural thing to do as part of the struggle towards further integrations of life and art.

By the convergence of what has been seen in class societies as art, and by the popular movements of participation, closing the gap between art and work, by Leninist forms of democratic activity from below, we can hope to regain on a higher level, in much more complex ways, the sort of unity we noted in tribal societies.

We very much regret that owing to increases in costs it will be necessary to put up the price of

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to 30p as from the June issue.

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Centenary of the "Critique of the Gotha Programme"

A. L. Morton

We print below the text of the annual Marx Memorial Lecture, delivered under the auspices of the Marx Memorial Library, on March 14, 1975.

The invitation to give the Marx Memorial Lecture in this year of 1975 was particularly welcome as affording an opportunity to consider some aspects of *The Critique of the Gotha Programme,* written (though not of course published) just 100 years ago. This short but exceptionally pregnant work, still, I think, not sufficiently known, dissects the draft programme of the Gotha Congress at which the two sections of the German workers' movement were fused into a united party. It was thus an *occasional* work, written, that is, with a very limited and specific object, but nothing Marx wrote illustrates better his capacity for raising such a work into a discussion of the most fundamental problems—problems which are still with us today to a remarkable degree. It is also one of the rare occasions when Marx attempted to look into the future.

Prussianised Germany

But first of all I want to say something of the historical circumstances in which it was written. Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century was little more than a geographical expression, a crazy patchwork of states whose only common features were that most of their inhabitants spoke German and all suffered under extremely backward and despotic governments. It consisted of two large states, Prussia and Austria, the latter being peculiar in that its German inhabitants were greatly outnumbered by Czech, Hungarian, Slovak, Croat, Roumanian and other subject peoples. There were a few small medium states and a host of micro-states with different currencies, customs duties, weights and measures, tariffs and so forth—a veritable museum of medieval antiquities.

The attempt in the revolutionary years of 1848-9 to sweep away the reactionary lumber and unite Germany on a broadly democratic basis had been defeated, but unification in some form was universally seen to be both necessary and inevitable. Meanwhile, despite the immense political obstacles, capitalist industry was growing rapidly, especially in the Rhineland, Saxony and Silesia. The question of German unity was of especial importance to the workers, since no national movement could be hoped for in a fragmented Germany. To the bourgeoisie also, as Engels says in *The Role of Force in History,* German unity had become an economic necessity:

> "Three courses were open after the attempts of 1848 . . . had failed. . . . The first was the real unification of the country by the elimination of all the separate, individual states, in other words, the open revolutionary way. . . .
> "The second course was unification under Austrian predominance."

Engels showed why neither of these courses had been possible, and that there remained the third, the one actually taken, of unification under the leadership of Prussia.

It was the role of Prussia under Bismarck to satisfy the national, social and economic requirements of the German bourgeoisie while preserving the political structure of the Junker-based Prussian monarchy. The wars of 1866 against Austria (which Engels described as a *civil war*) and of 1870 against France were the decisive steps in the creation of this new German Empire. The result was what Marx in 1875 categorised as "a state which is nothing else—though embellished with a parliamentary form of government and intermingled with feudal relics—than a police-guarded military despotism, bureaucratically constructed and already influenced by the bourgeoisie".

Lassalle

It was against this background that a movement towards the creation of a party of the German working class began to develop in the 1860s. After 1849 the Communist League was destroyed and the leaders of the working class were imprisoned or driven into exile. The ideas which Marx and Engels had put forward in the Communist Manifesto remained virtually un-

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known. At this point the name of Ferdinand Lassalle must be introduced. Lassalle was a brilliant young lawyer from Silesia who came to Berlin and embarked on a meteoric literary and political career. He read and admired the early writings of Marx and for a time their relations were friendly, but before long deep differences between their outlooks became apparent, differences which form the basis for Marx's polemic in the *Critique*.

Lassalle was and remained a Hegelian idealist to whom the state was always an abstraction representing the will of the people as a whole rather than an instrument of class power. And it must be remembered that we are talking not of the state in general but the existing Prussian state within which the young workers' movement had to operate. He believed that with manhood suffrage it would be possible to take over this Prussian state and use it as an instrument to further the workers' cause. Worse still, he saw the Prussian state as the necessary means for German unification and therefore as a force to that extent progressive. He even urged upon Bismarck the setting up of state-financed co-operatives which he naïvely supposed might become the germ of a socialist society.

In return he was willing to offer Bismarck the support of the workers (assuming that it was his to offer!) for his policy of Prussian aggrandisement. Some of his intrigue with Bismarck became known to Marx after his death, but its full extent was not revealed till the discovery in 1928 of his correspondence with Bismarck, in the course of which he wrote (June 1863):

> "However, you will realise clearly from this miniature (the status of the All German Workers' Association which he had just founded) how true it is that the labouring classes incline instinctively to a dictatorship once they can be convinced that the dictatorship is being exercised in their interests, and how much they would be inclined, as I suggested to you recently, despite their republican leanings—or rather just because of them—to accept the Crown as the natural instrument of a social dictatorship rather than the egoism of the bourgeois class, if the Crown on its part could make up its mind to take the—truly very improbable—step of adopting a really revolutionary and national policy, and turn itself from a monarchy of the privileged classes into a social and revolutionary people's monarchy."

After Lassalle's death in 1864 this policy was continued by his followers even to the extent of accepting financial help. Marx and Engels, while insisting on the need for independence, always believed that the workers should be prepared to co-operate with progressive sections of the middle classes against the autocracy. This was undoubtedly correct policy, and, coming from relatively civilised Rhineland Prussia they had an unlimited contempt for the barbarian Junkers of Brandenburg and the north-eastern latifundia. For them a genuine extension of democracy was a condition for an effective class struggle for socialism. This was the exact opposite to Lassalle's policy and it is not hard to see that their tactical differences arose from their opposed theoretical understanding of the nature of the state.

In a letter to Kautsky Engels later made a characterisation of Lassalle:

> "The whole fame of Lassalle rests on this, that for years Marx allowed him to parade the results of Marx's research as though they were his own, and what is more to distort them through his imperfect mastery of economics. . . . Lassalle has belonged to history for twenty-six years. Although for a time, owing to the exceptional law, historical criticism remained silent about him, the day must come when criticism is no longer quiet and Lassalle's position relative to Marx is revealed. No, the legend that disguises and obscures the true nature of Lassalle cannot become an article of Party belief. However highly one may esteem Lassalle's service to the movement, his historical role in it remains equivocal. The socialist Lassalle is accompanied step by step by the demagogue Lassalle.... Until 1862 a distinct vulgar Democrat in practice with strong Bonapartist leanings (I have just been reading through his letters to Marx), he turned round suddenly and began his agitation; and before two years were past he affirmed that the workers should side with the Royalist Party against the bourgeoisie, and intrigued with Bismarck, to whom he was closely related in character, in a way that would have led to an effectual betrayal of the Party, had he not, luckily for himself, been shot."

Lassalle's death took place in 1864 when he was killed in a duel arising from a preposterous love affair.

Perhaps the nearest English equivalent, though on a smaller scale, is Hyndman (Engels called him a "wretched caricature of Lassalle"). Though their views were not altogether identical, they shared a taste for intrigue, a combination of sectarianism with opportunism, a big dose of vanity and personal ambition, and, finally, an admiration for Marx's ideas with an inability to understand or apply them. I find it hard not to think that the first reaction of Marx and Engels on encountering Hyndman, was, "Oh God! Not again!".

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Towards Unity

Meanwhile a second socialist movement was gathering strength in a less spectacular but more firmly based way. Marx's friend, Wilhelm Liebknecht, had returned from exile in 1862. He broke with the All German Workers' Association when he saw that its leaders were acting in the interests of Bismarck and the Prussian government. As a south German he tended to prefer even the existing small-state anarchy to Prussian dominance. Moving to Saxony he joined August Bebel in an agitation among workers' clubs which led to the formation of the Social Democratic Party, often known as the Eisenachers after the town where its founding Congress was held.

Prussia's victory over Austria in 1866 ensured its supremacy in Germany, and the next year Bismarck took Lassalle's advice to the extent of introducing a new constitution which granted universal suffrage while withholding any real power from the bodies which were elected by it. It soon became obvious how limited were the advantages of this Lassallean panacea under such circumstances. The Eisenachers had to face their first big test when the Franco-Prussian war broke out in 1870. They responded with great courage, taking a firm position of international solidarity. Liebknecht and Bebel opposed Bismarck's policies inside and outside the Reichstag and were imprisoned along with other leaders of the party. By contrast, the Lassalleans, now led by Von Schweitzer, supported the war and the nationalist aims of the government.

For the moment this opportunism paid off, while the Eisenachers suffered from the war atmosphere and the accusation of unpatriotism. Once the war was over things began to look different, especially as Bismarck, most ungratefully, began a repression in which both parties were impartially attacked. The need for unity became increasingly apparent, and in practice co-operation developed at all levels. By now the two groups were of approximately equal strength, but, while the Eisenachers were gaining, the Lassalleans were losing ground.

In September 1874 Marx met Liebknecht in Leipzig, where they discussed the prospects of unity in general terms. Marx seems to have advised caution, as Engels had done a year earlier in a letter to Bebel:

> "In any case, I think the efficient elements among the Lassalleans will fall to you of themselves in the course of time, and it would therefore be unwise to break off the fruit before it is ripe, as the unity people want."

Liebknecht, who had always consulted Marx on every important problem, even if he did not always take the advice given him, on this occasion kept him completely in the dark—he only learnt from newspapers that representatives of the parties had been meeting and that a draft programme and rules had been drawn up. In March 1875 he was able to read the text of this programme—once again, in a newspaper. Not unnaturally he was furious, especially when it turned out to contain a crude mass of Lassallean ideas, ideas which he believed he had beaten out of the heads of his German friends years ago. The new programme was not only inadequate—it was in every way a step back from the point marked by the Eisenach Programme six years earlier.

Not that he attached excessive importance to a programme *as such*. As he wrote to Bracke:

> "*Every step of actual movement is more important than a dozen programmes*. If it was thus not possible—and contemporary circumstances do not permit this—to go beyond the Eisenach programme then there should simply have been concluded an *agreement for action* against the common enemy. But if a programme of principles is drawn up (instead of postponing this until it has been prepared for by prolonged joint activity) a landmark is erected before the whole world by which it can measure the extent of the party movement. The leaders of the Lassalleans came to us because circumstances forced them to do so. If it had been explained to them beforehand that there would be no truck with hagglers on principles, they would have had to content themselves with a programme of action or a plan of organisation for joint action. Instead of this, they have been allowed to appear armed with mandates and these mandates have been recognised on our side as valid and thus we are making an unconditional surrender to the very people who are needing our help."

Engels, too condemned the programme as a backward step:

> "Generally the official programme of a party is less important than what it actually does. But a *new* programme is always like running up a flag publicly, and the outer world judges the party by this flag. It should in no circumstances signal a step backwards as this one does compared with the Eisenach programme."

Marx's Warning Ignored

Marx declared that it gave him "no pleasure to write such a lengthy rebuke". It certainly gave none to the very few leaders of the Party who were given the opportunity to read it. These did not include Bebel (in spite of Marx's direct

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request that it should be shown to him) though he did have much of its content in a long letter from Engels. Neither he nor Bracke were happy about the draft, but seem to have felt that the Party was now so committed that it was impossible to draw back. The *Critique* was thus an embarrassment and had to be hushed up.

Here, perhaps, is the place to make one criticism I feel necessary. Not of the *content* of the *Critique* but of its *tone*. It is hard not to feel that it might have won more immediate attention if Marx had confined himself to criticism of the main theoretical errors, which, indeed, would have given him plenty of scope. Instead, he felt compelled to pursue the ghost of Lassalle down every last avenue. To secure maximum effectiveness in polemic even the appearance of personal resentment ought to be avoided. And it has often happened that political differences have led to treating those who disagree with us as enemies, with the tragic results that we saw most clearly in the period of the cult of personality. I am not, of course, suggesting that Marx was in any sense directly to blame for any such excesses, but it may be that the manner of his polemic with Lassalle or with Bakunin, however justified his criticisms were, have provided precedents which later have led to regretable excesses.

Some of Marx's criticisms of Lassallean formulations, important as they are, may be dealt with quite briefly, though there are few which do not bear in some way upon our own problems. Marx objects, for example, to the typical Lassallean statement that opposed to the workers "all other classes form merely a homogeneous reactionary mass". Here a simple dogmatic statement is offered as a substitute for an analysis which takes into account the actual disposition of class forces at any given place and time. The bourgeoisie, no doubt, are a reactionary class *as opposed to the workers*. But in Junker Prussia of 1875 they still had a progressive role to play. We have already seen that Lassalle was even ready to fight the battle of the Junkers *against* the bourgeoisie—for the same reason he made no attempt to detach the peasants from the semi-feudal landowners. It is one thing to say "We must do all we can to win the majority of the people for socialism". It is quite a different thing to say "When we have won a majority for socialism, then and not till then, the revolution can commence". Marx and Engels, like Lenin after them, were always aware that the workers must find allies, however unstable these may be and however different their reasons for embarking on struggle.

Similarly Marx complains that the programme substitutes for any statement of international working class solidarity a vague and meaningless phrase about "international brotherhood", "borrowed from the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom". Just such phrases today are used by "socialist" supporters of the Common Market. Such vagueness was an unacceptable concession by the Eisenachers, who had behaved so well in 1870-1, to the Lassalleans who had disgraced themselves. As Engels wrote to Bebel:

> "The position of the German workers at the head of the European movement rests *essentially* on their staunchly international attitude during the war; no other proletariat had behaved so well. And now this principle would be disavowed at a moment when everywhere abroad the workers are in equal measure laying emphasis on it, when the governments are making every attempt to suppress its activities in an organised form."

Thirdly, the programme embodied Lassalle's phrase about "the iron law of wages". Like Hyndman after him Lassalle distorted the scientific materialism of Marx into determinism. This led in practice to a denial that the workers could make real advances under capitalism, to a failure to understand the importance of trade unions, to an inability to relate the struggle for socialism to the struggle for immediate demands and to the attitude summed up in Britain by the use of the word palliatives.

The Future of Socialism

Important as all these questions are, they are lesser matters compared with what Lenin called the "positive part" of the *Critique,* "namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state". To this is related the question of the "right to the whole value of the product of labour", of right in general, of freedom and of Marx's thinking about the "two stages" and the deductions that can be drawn from them about the nature of communist society. It was upon this foundation that Lenin built in *The State and Revolution.*

Marx opens his argument with a consideration of Lassalle's favourite phrase about the right of the worker to the whole product of his labour. This embodies an outlook natural to pre-capitalist peasant and artisan forms of production, where the product of the individual's labour can be more or less identified. With the development of capitalism it became increasingly meaningless, but survived as a relic and a propaganda slogan, which, as Marx said, had once had some meaning but now had to be rooted out as nonsensical and unscientific. Much the same could be said of a

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whole group of ideas about equity, rights and equality which survived from the Utopian stage of socialist thinking and were all related to the belief that socialism was not something which evolved, but which could be artificially constructed according to abstract principles and to any pattern that might be desired. As Lenin wrote:

> "The whole theory of Marx is an application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, well-considered and fruitful form—to modern capitalism. It was natural for Marx to raise the question of applying this theory both to the *coming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism.
>
> "On the basis of what *data* can the future development of future communism be considered?
>
> "On the basis of the fact that it *has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism has *given birth*. There is no shadow of an attempt on Marx's part to conjure up a Utopia, to make idle guesses about that which cannot be known. Marx treats the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the development of, say, a new biological species, if he knew that such and such was its origin, and such and such the direction in which it changed."

So, in the *Critique*, Marx, instead of starting with rights, considers the actual way in which the "total social product" would have to be disposed of. He lists two groups of necessary deductions—the first consists of:

Reimbursement for the replacement of means of production used up;

An additional portion for the extension of production;

Reserve or insurance funds against misadventures etc.

What remains is available for purposes of consumption, but before the actual producer gets his share there are further deductions for:

The general costs of administration;

The satisfaction of social needs—schools, health etc.;

Provision for those unable to work.

You will have observed how this list differs from what one would have to draw up in Britain today—there is no deduction for the payment of the owners of the means of production. What socialism abolishes immediately is not inequality or injustice but exploitation. It is no less true, of course, that with this step society *begins to move towards* fuller equality and justice. But in Marx's words:

> "What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as if it had *developed on a basis of its own*, but on the contrary as *it emerged from capitalist society*, which is thus in every respect tainted economically, morally and intellectually with the hereditary diseases of the old society from whose womb it is emerging. In this way the individual producer receives back again from society, with deductions, exactly what he gives.... The same amount of work which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another."

The equal right here is that "equal quantities of labour in one form are exchanged for equal quantities of labour in another form . . .this equal right is still continually handicapped by bourgeois limitation".

In fact, men are equal neither in their powers nor their needs. The work of some is more productive than that of others so that the formula "from each according to his work" must result in inequality of rewards. Nor would the difficulty be resolved merely by equalising wages. "One worker is married, another single, one has more children than the other and so forth.... To avoid all these inconveniences, rights must be unequal instead of being equal."

Such inequalities, as Marx perhaps hints when speaking of the necessary deductions to be made, can to a certain extent be counter-balanced by socialist development of public services and of provision for those unable to work. Under nineteenth century capitalism the burden of supporting these fell mainly upon the individual worker —as indeed is the case today to a greater extent than is often imagined. Even in the first stage much can be done along these lines, though ultimately, as Engels pointed out, equality can only mean the abolition of classes. This advance cannot be completed in the first stage. In the words of Marx:

> "These deficiencies are unavoidable in the first phase of communist society when it is just emerging after prolonged birth-pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined."

The Two Stages

This transition period, then, brings great and important gains to the great mass of the people, yet its profounder historical significance is that it creates the conditions for its own supercession and the passing of society into a new stage:

> "In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under the division of labour, and there-

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> with also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished, after labour has become not merely a means to live but has become itself the primary condition of life, after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois rights be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

There is perhaps no single passage in the whole of Marx's writings more pregnant: every word is loaded with meaning and opens new avenues of thought. Yet, strange as it may seem, these ideas about the two stages were for long virtually ignored and it took many years before they became part of the intellectual currency of the socialist movement. To this there is one shining exception—that of William Morris. I make no apology here for allowing myself the luxury of digression at this point, since it illustrates very clearly how fully Morris accepted the teaching of Marx, and the work of Morris in turn constitutes an invaluable commentary and interpretation of Marx's all too brief formulations.

I need hardly say, perhaps, how far in debt I am for this part of my talk to Dr. Paul Meier's remarkable book, *La Pensée Utopique de William Morris,* a book which I am happy to say is in process of being translated into English.

Dr. Meier remarks that "it is impossible for us to believe with E. P. Thompson that Morris was able, without having any knowledge of them, to rediscover "in his intuitive way" the ideas expressed by Marx in *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*.... Despite our sincere admiration of his genius it is difficult to believe that he was able, unaided, to raise himself to such a theoretical level". He points out that nowhere in socialist literature before Lenin, who avowedly based himself on the *Critique,* are the theories of unequal rights and, above all, of the two stages, handled in so masterly a fashion.

It has been suggested that Morris may have gained some knowledge of the *Critique* by way of Bax: Dr. Meier points out that Bax, in his own writings, shows neither knowledge of nor interest in these questions while Morris refers to them over and over again from 1885 onwards. The conclusion that Morris acquired his knowledge direct from Engels, in whose hands the unpublished manuscript of the *Critique* was, seems inescapable.

The two stages are mentioned first in a note to the programme of the Socialist League:

> "The end which true socialism sets before us is the realisation of absolute equality of condition, helped by the development of variety of capacity, according to the motto, *from* each one according to his capacity, *to* each according to his needs; but it may be necessary, and probably will be, to go through a transitional period, during which currency will still be used as a medium of exchange, though of course it will not bear with it the impress of surplus value."

Similar ideas are to be found in *The Hopes of Civilisation* of the same year and in *The Society of the Future,* 1886. Here he mentions that two views exist among socialists as to the organisation of society:

> "These two views of the future of society are sometimes opposed to each other as socialism and communism, but to my mind the latter is simply a necessary development of the former, which implies a transition period, during which people would be getting rid of the habits of mind bred by long ages of tyranny and commercial competition, and be learning that it is to the interest of each that all should thrive."

And in *Communism,* written near the end of his life, he says: "between complete socialism and communism there is no difference whatever in my mind. Communism is in fact the completion of socialism: when that ceases to be militant and becomes triumphant it will be communism."

Socialism and Communism

Morris's use of the terms socialism and communism in this connection is of particular interest. This is something not found in Marx, indeed, to quote Dr. Meier again:

> "William Morris is the first, it appears to us, to use the terms Socialist and Communist to designate, on the one hand, the two stages of the new society and on the other, two political doctrines: the one regarding the first stage as an end in itself, the other seeing it only as a step towards a higher stage.... For Morris the distinction between socialism and communism was clear: he drew it in his mind not in relation to the past or the present but in relation to the future, and that is why he preferred for himself the title of Communist."

Marx, as I say, did not use these terms, but Lenin did:

> "If we ask ourselves what distinguishes communism from socialism, we must say that socialism is the society that grows directly out of capitalism, is the first form of the new Society. Communism, however, is a higher form of society, and it can only develop when

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> socialism has been completely consolidated. Socialism implies work without the help of capitalists, social labour with strict accounting, control and supervision by the organised advance guard, the foremost section of the workers; for that reason both the norms of labour and the rewards of labour must be laid down. The fixing of these is necessary because capitalist society has bequeathed to us such tendencies and such habits as absence from work, distrust of social economy, old habits of the small farmer which are prevalent in all peasant countries."

It seems improbable that Morris and Lenin hit on this identical use of terms quite independently and not very probable that Lenin took it direct from Morris. If there are links in a chain connecting the two it would be interesting to discover them: I know of none and should be interested to hear of any.

Morris seems to have made conflicting estimates of the probable duration of the first stage. In one lecture he speaks of "many generations". At times he was hopeful that it might be "short". He perhaps gave most thought to such questions while writing *News from Nowhere* and Dr. Meier by an ingenious analysis of various, not always quite consistent, indications concludes that he envisaged a transition of at least a century and probably longer. Obviously precision is impossible since one stage merges imperceptibly into the other: the state is not abolished, it withers away, a point to which I hope to return.

Indeed, when one considers the immensity of the tasks which have to be accomplished in the first stage, it could hardly be anything *but* long, and in this Marx and Lenin would seem to be in agreement with Morris. These tasks are both economic and psychological: the material basis has to be transformed and human behaviour (I am careful *not* to say human nature) has to be transformed correspondingly. No doubt the change begins in the material basis, but once begun a dialectical interrelation is established in which changes go hand in hand. Marx rightly links the material and the psychological prerequisites—after labour has become itself the primary necessity of life, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then will the higher stage of full communism be possible and the "narrow horizons of bourgeois right be left fully behind".

This conflicts in no way with what he had written long before in the *Communist Manifesto* about the necessity to "increase the productive forces as rapidly as possible", but it extends it immeasurably, above all in the sense that emphasis is placed upon men rather than things. It is in the light of this that we should look at the idea of the abundant flowing of wealth as one of the conditions for the fulfilment of human needs.

No doubt socialism increases the productive forces and eliminates the waste which is one of the characteristic features of capitalism. No doubt that under socialism the development of science will be such that a far more effective use will be made of all our resources. But when all has been said, I think that in the light of our growing awareness of impending ecological crisis and of the consequences of the century of blind and greedy plunder of our planet that has elapsed since the time of Marx, it is no longer possible for us to continue to think, as we too often did in the past, of abundance simply as an inexhaustible supply of food and consumer goods.

Human Needs

I do not believe that it is or ever will be either possible or desirable for the whole world to live at the material level now enjoyed (if that is the word) by the United States or even the most advanced European industrial countries. Consider one point only—in Britain I suppose we have something like one car to every other family, in the US it must be nearer a car to *every* family. To imagine this extended over the whole population of the world would be horrifying if it were not manifestly absurd.

This does not in any way mean that poverty and deprivation are inevitable—nothing could be farther from the truth. But it does mean that one of the main tasks of the first phase will be a world-wide re-deployment of our resources, based on an entirely new conception of human needs. In passing, may I remind you that Marx says *needs*—he does not say wants.

We live in a society which finds it profitable, which, indeed finds it necessary, to be constantly stimulating imaginary wants. That is what the advertising world is about. We live also in a society which produces for obsolesence, which turns out endless quantities of consumer trash which are intended to wear out by the time the instalments have been paid. Failing this, fashion is invoked to persuade us what was novel and delightful a year ago is now ugly and ridiculous.

Morris, and I make no apology for returning to him, discussed some of these problems in his lecture *The Society of the Future*. He saw with disgust the beginning of an evil that has since grown far worse. Asked how far socialism could provide luxuries, he replied:

"We don't want them and won't have them:

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> and indeed, I feel that we cannot if we are all free men together. Free men, I am sure, must lead simple lives and have simple pleasures: and if we shudder away from that necessity now, it is because we are not free men, and have in consequence wrapped up our lives in such a complexity of dependence that we have grown feeble and helpless."

Simplicity does not mean asceticism. Neither Morris nor yet Marx and Engels saw socialism with the eyes of a Stafford Cripps. It means a society in which we shall constantly be asking ourselves, what are our real needs? What do men need to enjoy a full, happy and dignified life, and how do we set about getting it? I am sure we shall come up with some surprising answers, different, perhaps, in every generation. "The good life of the future," Morris wrote, "will be as little like the life of the present rich as may be." This should apply to nations no less than individuals. Just as no man will live like the present rich, so in no country of the world will life in any way resemble that of the United States today. This may not be an easy lesson, especially for the advanced nations which have most to unlearn.

Abundance, then, will become more and more a matter of quality. It will be in no one's interest to produce shoddy goods, it will be in everyone's that everything available, and available for all, will be of the very best in material, workmanship and style. We shall learn to enjoy and treasure our possessions and so shall insist on excellence. One incidental but important result will be to reduce to a fraction the present waste of scarce raw materials (to say nothing of human labour) now put into articles used once or a few times and then thrown away. Men will be entering a new relationship, not only with each other, but with the natural world and the things they obtain from it. This may sound somewhat fanciful, but I am convinced that it follows logically from what Marx says about the nature of the advance towards socialism.

Marx on the State

To put the matter in a sentence, in the first stage we shall be learning to be free men, and this brings me to what Marx has to say about freedom and the state. The draft Gotha Programme declared that the Party "strives by all legal means to achieve a free state and socialist society". Marx commented that to speak of a free state was a logical absurdity. To the extent that it was free it was no longer a state. "Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ standing above society into one completely subordinated to it." Any form of state has as its basis a form of class rule and all states then existing, however much they differed in detail "stand on the basis of modern bourgeois society".

What then, Marx asked, will be the form of the state in a communist society? Here he is referring to the first stage, since, as was explained in the *Communist Manifesto* long before, in the second the state will become "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all". Of the state in the first stage Marx writes:

> "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.*"

This famous phrase has been the subject of much misunderstanding, and sometimes, I think, we are inclined to shy away from it. We should remember first that in 1875 the word dictatorship had not acquired the pejorative sense we now attach to it. Marx was a classical scholar and he would remember that it arose in ancient Rome where it was used merely to describe a special form of rule to be adopted in times of grave crisis.

We can also link it with two remarks of Engels. First that the Paris Commune was the exemplar of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, second, that the Commune was "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word". And, as Lenin pointed out, it has a *double* character. On the one hand it "produces a series of restrictions of liberty in the case of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists". On the other, and this is clearly more important, it involves "an immense expansion of democracy for the people". No form of state is an end in itself. Marx argued that the workers' party should fight to supplant the Junker-military Prussian autocracy by a democratic republic, because this affords the best conditions under which the class struggle can be developed. And similarly the dictatorship of the proletariat is the appropriate form within which alone the disappearance, the withering away, of the state can take place in the higher stage of communism. As Lenin said, this higher stage cannot be introduced, it can only evolve.

From Gotha to Erfurt

Now in conclusion a brief historical postcript. The unity Congress at Gotha took place as planned from May 22 to May 27. Marx's criticisms were ignored, and were, indeed, unknown to all but a handful of those present. The draft

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programme was accepted with only minor amendments, none of which altered its essential character. Marx and Engels had intended, after the Congress, to publish a statement publicly dissenting from its decisions. In the end they decided that this was not necessary. As Engels explained in a letter to Bracke:

> "Fortunately the programme has had better luck than it deserved. The workers, as also did the bourgeoisie, and petty bourgeoisie, read into it what ought naturally to have been in it, but not what was actually in it, and no one from either side has happened to examine one of these wonderful sentences for its real content. This has enabled us to keep silence over the programme."

Neither Marx nor Engels expected the new unity to last long, but in fact the Lassallean leadership played no prominent part in the Party and the rank and file were readily absorbed.

Also, by the oddest turn, Bismarck himself came to the rescue. An attempt to assassinate Emperor Wilhelm in 1878, in which the socialists were in no way involved, was used as a pretext for a series of anti-socialist laws by which the Party was driven underground, though its members were still able to carry on propaganda and contest elections. Forced to fight for its life it closed its ranks and sectarian differences faded into the background. Driven back upon itself it developed a life of its own and became almost an alternative establishment. This, though a source of immediate strength, was later to become a weakness, and, I think, contributed to the later degeneracy of German Social Democracy.

The 12 years of the Anti-Socialist Laws, however, were its heroic period and it grew steadily in strength and influence. By 1890 the victory had been won and Engels wrote:

> "The German Social Democratic workers have just won a triumph which their tough steadfastness, their iron discipline, their cheerful humour in the struggle, their tirelessness have well earned."

Now it was time for a new programme, to signalise a new stage in its life. This time all was done in proper style. Engels's first step was to publish the *Critique* in the Party's theoretical journal the *Neue Zeit*, early in 1891. Even then a little pressure was needed on some of the leaders, but the *Critique* was enthusiastically welcomed by the rank and file and its influence was decisive on the character of the new programme.

The draft prepared for the Erfurt Congress was sent to Engels in good time. He agreed that it compared "very favourably with the former programme" and is "on the whole based on present-day science and can be discussed on this basis". His discussion, *A Critique of the Draft Social Democratic Programme of 1891*, received careful consideration and most of his suggestions were embodied in the programme as finally agreed. Some weaknesses remained, but Engels expressed his general satisfaction. The Erfurt Programme was regarded as a model, and when Lenin in 1899 was working on the draft programme of the Russian Social Democrats he wrote: "today, when we so often hear opportunist and equivocal criticisms of that programme, we consider it our duty to speak out in its favour".

Review Article:

Parliament and the Law

On Lord Justice Scarman's Hamlyn Lectures

John Hostettler

In today's changing world it is right we should rethink our attitudes to the nature and content of civil liberty and human rights. It is not surprising therefore that widespread interest was aroused last December when extracts appeared in the press from the striking Hamlyn Lectures given by Lord Justice Scarman. References to our "ailing legal system" and the need for a Bill of Rights were profuse in the headlines.

Now that the lectures have been published in

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full under the title *English Law—The New Dimension* (Stevens, £1.50) it is possible to see more clearly what the fuss was all about. Lord Justice Scarman is well qualified to raise the issues involved.

He is chairman of the Law Commission set up by the Labour Government in 1965 to reform the law and secure it a better structure for the future. Many of its reports have been well received including the major Divorce Law reform and recent reports still being studied by the government include one on conspiracy law that recommends limiting the offence of conspiracy to cases of agreement to commit a crime.

He has also reported on disturbances in Northern Ireland and recently headed the enquiry into the Red Lion Square demonstrations when student Kevin Gately died.

Whilst apparently approving Britain's membership of the EEC he has also given explicit indications of what such membership means by way of inroads into British sovereignty and law.

Clearly a judge with considerable influence, Lord Justice Scarman is considered by some to be one of the most enlightened members of the Bench; which quality may be highlighted by the particular conservatism of most of his brother judges.

In his lectures the Lord Justice raises issues that are both far-reaching for the future of English law and have important political implications.

The Challenge to English Common Law

He considers that the English common law, which existed before parliament and the legislative process, faces social, political and economic challenges from the contemporary world which, if it cannot meet them, will destroy it.

These challenges he describes in the following way:

(1) The challenge from overseas—
  (a) the international movement to secure human rights, and
  (b) the Common Market;
(2) The social challenge: family life and social security;
(3) The challenge of the environment;
(4) The industrial challenge;
(5) The regional challenge.

It will be seen that the first of these challenges is divided into two parts and, as Lord Justice Scarman clearly believes the international law challenges sufficient to justify his proposals regardless of whether or not we withdraw from the EEC, they need consideration whatever result the referendum may produce.

He argues that, although the United Kingdom adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in 1950 was the first state to ratify the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, there is no adequate protection in English law for these rights. Although he does not mention it this is borne out by the breach of most of the articles of the Convention in Northern Ireland from 1950 (and before) until the present day.

Despite this there can be no doubt that the influence of the Convention is growing in Britain. Already we are before the bar of the Human Rights Court at the suit of the Republic of Ireland alleging the torture of prisoners; the *Sunday Times* is petitioning the Court for the failure of English law to protect the freedom of speech in the thalidomide case; and there is an appeal for the first time by an individual, alleging he was denied access to his lawyers while in custody in a British prison.

A Bill of Rights?

These cases are quite independent of our membership of the EEC and confirm Lord Justice Scarman in his view that we should have a declaration of fundamental freedoms incorporated into our constitution. This should be accomplished, he thinks, by means of an entrenched Bill of Rights forming part of a new constitutional settlement to replace that of 1689. Such a Bill of Rights would guarantee not only fundamental human rights but also the European treaties, the devolution to regional assemblies and the requirement for a statutory majority of substantial size (perhaps two-thirds) before these entrenched provisions could be repealed.

In recent years such a Bill of Rights might have nullified the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 which forbade Kenyan Asians holding UK passports from entering this country; internment in Northern Ireland; and some parts of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974 which has recently scarred the statute book.

Such a Bill of Rights it is argued would thus serve a useful purpose in upholding human rights. Yet its mere existence—and certainly the insistence that its provisions be entrenched and should require a two-thirds majority for repeal —would seriously limit the sovereignty of Parliament and often cause injustice. A written text may sometimes be useful but it is inflexible to the changing needs of people and society in a way that parliamentary debate is not. Furthermore the wider its provisions the more widely would the judges, in interpreting the law, be able to interfere in matters of public policy.

In fact, it is a logical step from requiring entrenched provisions to giving the courts a

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more decisive role and Lord Justice Scarman is led to require that the Bill of Rights should be protected against the State and Parliament by a Supreme Court able to declare legislation invalid as unconstitutional. And there's the rub.

Strange Examples

The Lord Justice considers that "when times are abnormally alive with fear and prejudice" the common law "cannot resist the will, however frightened and prejudiced it might be, of Parliament". Why it should be able to at all we will come to, but first let us look at the strange examples given to prove the point.

Regulation 18(b) in wartime is one; the inability of the courts to correct the retrospective effect of the Immigration Act 1971 is another.

In fact with Regulation 18(b) the courts not only upheld internment without trial but refused to follow the Regulation and require the Home Secretary to give the reasons for his decision with the result that he was left with unlimited personal discretion. It was not Parliament but the judges who were frightened and prejudiced as one of them, standing out against the rest, made clear.

Similarly in his second example, Lord Justice Scarman is seen to be facing the wrong way. It was the House of Lords judges who interpreted the Immigration Act to mean it had retrospective effect. It was a Labour government that reversed their ruling—albeit not decisively enough.

The Will of Parliament

To return, therefore, we must ask why should the law be able to resist the will of Parliament? Because Parliament might be frightened and prejudiced? Lord Justice Scarman's examples appear to show the judges more likely to exhibit these attributes. But, more important, why should a clearly political function be transferred from the elected representatives of the people to a narrowly based judiciary?

In order to show that this proposal is not entirely contrary to all our traditions and history Lord Justice Scarman skates over three centuries of experience to arrive back in the seventeenth century. Truly an important time in our history but what valuable treasures to assist the Lord Justice does it yield?

Apparently Sir Edward Coke was never easy in his mind when Parliament's unrestricted supremacy was urged upon him. And Oliver Cromwell said: "In every government there must be Somewhat Fundamental, Somewhat like a Magna Charter, which should be standing, be unalterable... of what assurance is a law to prevent so great an evil, if it lie in the same legislature to un-law it again."

Well, Cromwell was no doubt right, although, however unwillingly, he was not above dominating Parliament by arms and even dismissing it altogether. As for Coke he worked prodigiously for Parliament but in his struggle against the royal prerogative and ecclesiastical courts he came to believe the common law was perfect.

And as Lord Justice Scarman is proposing courts and judges with powers above Parliament perhaps we could look once more at the seventeenth century and see John Lilburne and the Levellers who vigorously proclaimed that the mainstream of the common law was corrupt and Gerrard Winstanley who wrote that: "the best laws that England hath are yokes and manacles, tying one sort of people to be slaves to another."

Lord Justice Scarman wants to take a new look at the law in the light of modern pressures on it but, with less clarity than Winstanley, sees the law and the judges, not in a vacuum, but outside the subtle influences both of the state and the social pressures that mould their consciousness.

Parliament must be Supreme

In any event, since those days the English Revolution and the Settlement of 1689 have led to Parliamentary supremacy, which helped destroy the vestiges of feudalism and pave the way to industrial capitalism. And all the way the law trailed behind. Now Parliamentary supremacy has a vital role to play in the change over to socialism which may be why it is under attack.

Even if a Bill of Rights were passed, its preservation, as distinct from its enforcement, should not be taken away from the elected Parliament. An example of what could happen if it were was seen recently in West Germany when the Federal Constitutional Courts placed a permanent injunction on abortion on demand during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy thus overruling a law passed by the legislature last year. The law was found by the court to infringe an article of the basic law concerning the "right to life". And the basic law is entrenched, requiring a two-thirds parliamentary majority for its repeal.

Similarly, after the war, the Federal Court, without cause, banned the West German Communist Party. When circumstances and the government's desire for a treaty with the Soviet Union caused it to regret the decision difficulty was experienced in reversing it because its decision was held to be permanent by virtue of the basic law. Whatever the problems, liberty must remain with the politicians, not the judges. Lord Justice Scarman appears to think that judges and lawyers have been in the vanguard of law reform

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and innovation in this country but that would not be the understanding of most people.

Fear of the House of Commons

He deplores the declining influence of the House of Lords but does he not thereby reveal a fear (even if unconscious) of a House of Commons that might want to transform society radically by its own efforts? Does he not, therefore, give moral support (though he may well wish not to) to politicians like Sir Keith Joseph who has publicly called for a Bill of Rights and a new Constitutional Court to curb what he calls the "new paternalists"?

Sir Keith Joseph has suddenly woken up to the dangers to his class from the growing political awareness of the working class and hurriedly wants to "reverse the trends of the last half century". His constitutional court would have powers to vet legislation and major Acts of Parliament would require different majorities to pass them. Which appears to go back, not just half a century, but to the beginning.

Lord Justice Scarman's motives are no doubt quite different from those of others making similar proposals but to the extent that he has a powerful influence it needs to be stressed both that he has the attitude of a traditional lawyer to the role of the judges which is seriously in error and that his proposals are being presented in a specific historical situation and context in this country's political development.

Challenge of the Common Market

The Common Market is the second external challenge from overseas (after international law of human rights) that Lord Justice Scarman discusses. The process of yielding to an international instrument he sees as having started with sections 2 and 3 of the European Communities Act 1972 which acknowledges the existence of a source of law and a court uncontrolled by Parliament. As a result parts of the Treaty of Rome are now English law the volume of which is already considerable although its impact has not yet been widely felt.

He thinks it too early yet to gauge the impact of all this on our law. But he quotes Lord Denning who in a Court of Appeal decision said: "The Treaty is like an incoming tide. It flows into the estuaries and up the rivers." And later he said: "We must no longer speak or think of English law as something on its own. We must speak and think of Community law, of Community rights and obligations, and we must give effect to them. This means a great effort for the lawyers. We have to learn a new system."

Lord Justice Scarman goes on to say:

> "If we stay in the Common Market, I would expect to see its principles of legislation and statutory interpretation and its conception of an activist court whose rule is to strengthen and fulfil the purpose of statute law replace the traditional attitudes of English judges and lawyers to statute law...."

In his opinion the power of Parliament to make what law it likes and the power of the judges to declare what the law is in those areas untouched by statute are contrary to the international obligations we have accepted. Hence a new constitutional settlement may be needed under which the underlying theory of our statute law may have to yield to a *jus gentium* arising outside Parliament, interpreted in the last resort by an international court, although enforced by our courts as part of our law.

All this may seem a contemporary challenge to lawyers and the courts. But it overlooks the fundamental role of the Common Market. The Common Market exists to meet the needs of the multinational companies and its political institutions are designed to protect them. A study of the role of the European "Parliament" and the Council of Ministers shows that democracy and majority decisions play no part in their functioning.

Space does not permit a detailed treatment here of Lord Justice Scarman's examination of the other challenges that he thinks might destroy English common law.

His main theme, however, is that in many vital areas of modern life such as industry, social security and devolution for Scotland and Wales the courts are becoming progressively irrelevant in face of the major role now played by over 52 administrative and other tribunals.

How to Change the Law

Again, the Lord Justice appears to overrate the role that lawyers and the law have played in championing those in need of social and welfare services. In general the law has a somewhat negative function of preventing injustice. This might be preserved or extended by an adequate system of appeals from tribunals, but a more positive function is also required which the law cannot provide—or at least has not in the past. It is normally not the common law and the judiciary who produce significant reforms but the working class in struggle.

If the law can be changed to be of help in this process such a transformation will be welcomed. That is not what Lord Justice Scarman seems to have in mind, but it is a matter to which the labour and progressive movement could usefully give some thought.

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Labour History:

Memories of the General Strike

Bill Carr

(The author, who was born in 1908, spent 42 years in coalmining, starting at the age of 14. He studied at Ruskin College, 1946–47. He held many positions in the N.U.M., including six years on the Yorkshire Area N.U.M. Executive. He was a Communist Councillor on the Thorne R.D.C. from 1958–74. He joined the Communist Party in May 1946 and was for 14 years a member of the Yorkshire District Committee.)

Over the last 110 years my grandfather, father and myself, have worked in the coal mining industry. Grandfather started at the age of 11. Throughout this period little has changed in the practice of obtaining coal from the seams at knock-down prices; never was there a commodity that has produced such huge fortunes—for the owner. And however the industry suffered from time to time through a fall in demand, the owner escaped hardship. He usually could find ways to pass on the fruits of the crisis to the man in the darkness—the miner. Which was really the crux of the great 1926 strike, the strike which nearly brought about the downfall of a Government, and but for a betrayal of the miners, would have succeeded.

I was 18 years old at the time, living at Millfield, a few miles from Newcastle-on-Tyne, and working at Maria Pit.

Between 1921 and 1926, coal-owners and the Government were continuously preoccupied with measures to deal with a post-war crisis of falling demand for coal. The artificially created war-time boom of a thriving armaments industry had partially brought the economic situation in Britain to stagnation after the war came to an end.

On the Eve of the Strike

Certain war-time controls, giving vast profits to some and a measure of full employment to all, created a semblance of comparative prosperity to the miner which he had previously not enjoyed. Hundreds of thousands of miners, too, died on the Mons battlefields. But the miner and his family had always to pay for any sweet crumbs that by chance came their way. So on May 1, 1926, the coal-owners decreed that all pits in Britain would close. The miner's union had rejected the demands of the owners which were:

(*a*) Proposal for increasing the working day (from 7½ to 8 hours a day).

(*b*) The Union should agree to the principle of a National Wage agreement with present national minimum firmly adhered to.

(*c*) Reduction of wages (10 per cent for a start) more to follow later.

Wrapped in whatever kind of jargon, it was quite clear to every miner what this meant in terms of extreme poverty in the home, greater back-breaking effort in the pit, surpassing any kind of demand that the miner had had to meet in any previous decade. The existing minimum wage was, in the majority of cases, the maximum wage, productive achievement having been set barely above the minimum wage level. A huge level of productivity was required for the miner to obtain a reasonably high reward and in only parts of a pit did conditions prevail for this to be possible. As for the majority of workers who worked away from the coal-face on a day wage, to be asked to undergo a further reduction in his already de-valued wage packet was to ask him to participate in ultimate suicide for his family.

The miner had no alternative to rejection and to prepare himself for struggle. He was to prove equal to the task he had to face, and not dishonoured by the final result. A notice was put up at the pit-heads by the coal-owners informing the men they would be required to sign a new contract if they desired to stay in employment at their pit. The terms were to be those in the aforementioned three points.

A Mining Family

My family of miners, my two uncles, and grandad with whom I lived, had already determined their "no" to this proposal to sign. Their good judgement decided my action. It was good to hear them debating the issue. Rough, tough, proud, honest, uncompromising, bull-dog types, limited in expression, fierce in denunciation of the coal-owners, they were the backbone of resistance to the tyranny of what was being demanded.

With no political aspirations or education, they were Labour in affiliation, and had, above all, a loyalty to their class, but not a shred of understanding of the underlying causes of capitalist crisis, which they were now chosen to meet.

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The miners were greatly heartened by the support of the TUC. On May 4, the day the General Strike was called, jubilation in the mining villages was at its height, though all knew the going was to be tough. The Government had already indicated that they had plans in preparation to oppose the TUC's efforts in their support of the miners.

Glowing speeches of support for the miners from TUC leaders, Bevin, Ramsay Macdonald (the traitor), Thomas (another one) and other eminent Labour figures were good for sustaining morale. It was good to know that the day had arrived when miners were not to be pulverised by the enemy in our isolation, especially since the Government had now declared a State of Emergency.

My family deduced, correctly it proved, that troops would be used to break the strike.

Councils of Action

Councils of Action were set up in our area. The plans outlined at these TUC-organised groups in the villages, which I attended, were in effect to set up at strategic points, barriers which would be manned by appointed pickets to control the movement of any vehicle in and out of the village. Any article delivered would be scrutinised, but only those needed for the sustenance of the community would be allowed. The vehicle driver would need a chit to grant him free passage.

In only one short term of a fortnight, masses of workers learned of their tremendous political power.

Inevitably, VIPs of many shades of honesty were driven to the conclusion that their whole future depended on the goodwill of the local Council of Action. Though they supported the Government, they had no scruples in applying to the Council for preferential treatment in the issuing of chits. To my delight they were rebuffed.

Picketing at the pit was intensive, though I cannot recollect any person at that time who would have dreamt of blacklegging in the face of the complete solidarity of the miners and their families.

The news media was already blazing out unprincipled lies about breakaways from the strike, denunciations against the strikers coupled with veiled threats. At odd times, I saw militant revolutionary sheets urging the lads on to victory, and giving clear lines of progress in the struggle.

But already there were rats at work. Tremendous forces had been unleashed in the struggle. I felt this on the picket line. These "forces" were daily reinforced by the loud promptings of TUC leaders urging greater efforts to consolidate the General Strike.

A total paralysis of the mines, railways, and factories, key sectors of the economy, a plain lesson of the glorious fruits of unity in action for victory for all to see, and at this vital stage, grave doubts, given great publicity, by the TUC leaders, began to appear.

TUC Prepares to Retreat

Meetings behind the scene of the union leaders supporting the miners became common. It was no secret that the way was being prepared for retreat. Warrants for the arrest of several trade union leaders had been issued by the Government which in the North aroused fierce opposition. The Council of Action in Newcastle were dealing quite effectively with the Government's Commissioner who was trying desperately to hold back the tide, without success.

But after nine days, despite the high level of discipline and resolve of the men in dispute, came the tragic call to surrender. We could know of no other reason for this outrageous act than the repeated endeavours of TUC leaders to "conciliation pleas" in the latter part of those nine days. These pleas were in line with Government attitudes. The TUC decision, however deplorable, did not have the desired effect of causing the miners to flinch from their struggle.

In fact, in our village, it had the effect of a further closing of our ranks, meeting blow with blow whatever was being inflicted on us. So it was the case elsewhere. Boards of Guardians, long hated for their means-tested spirit of doling out food to the sick, injured, and miners' families, were the target of many demonstrations. They were recruited to the cause of helping to undermine the spirit of the miners for struggle by keeping the bellies of women and children empty. We can find echoes today in the demands of re-action to refuse public aid to striking families.

The Reactionary Press

And we had our share too of the "Specials", "Volunteers", etc., call them what you like. "Steady, loyal, patriots, heroes in support of our freedom, and constitutional rights", so our Prime Minister described them—all the quarter million of them. Even the children of our village, fed in the main by our manned soup kitchens, had a whale of a time watching these contingents form fours, about turn, quick march in sometimes mindless confusion. They were in the main, made of boneheaded, "Rule Britannia" zealots, sprinkled with lower rank realists hankering after the softer life. I never had any doubts about their abilities when it came to lashing out on the striker with a baton, or even a gun. Together with the police, they were most hated of the Community. The press played its usual useful role. "Moscow Reds", "Alien work-shy agitators", new and to me unheard of creatures, who had infiltrated into our British way of life and had to be rooted out.

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What all this crap had to do with the fact that we as miners, all known to each other, solidly rejected the abject poverty of the coal-owners' terms, was beyond us. But I learned over the years how this water on stone technique by the press was most important as a weapon for the establishment. I think that lesson I learned was responsible for my tireless agitation and work, long before I joined the Communist Party, to promote the sales of the *Daily Worker* (later *Morning Star*). But this was a long time after the 1926 strike.

Miners Fight On

This was a most exciting period of my life. The collapse of the General Strike, while disheartening to the miners, did not lead to any weakening of resolve. My family expressed the reactions of everyone around us when they vilified the traitors who left us to struggle alone, though care was taken not to denounce the workers who had responded to the call. Miners' leaders throughout Britain redoubled their efforts to rally the miners for struggle, at the same time spelling out the causes of the desertions. Arrests of miners' leaders were denounced, and at the several mass meetings I attended on Newcastle Town Moor, the anger of the miners was clearly shown by calls for more retaliation in reply to the attacks by the Government.

It seemed nothing but death could silence this great roar, a demand for justice. Great fighters without a doubt! Meanwhile, each day in the villages was marked by some new event. The women organised all kinds of supper evenings. The supper my aunt provided was from a wash boiler, chips fried in fat provided free by a local butcher. Others produced boiled peas, and there was always plenty of home-baked loaves standing on window ledges to cool off for consumption later in the day. Herrings were ten a penny. Living on the fringe of the Northumbrian moors, netting rabbits was a nightly pursuit. Wild birds' eggs we could obtain easily. We even helped farmers in their fields for the reward of a bag of potatoes. Pinching went on too, but it was mostly from public or private property which had little or no relevance for the owners.

Fuel was needed for cooking too, there were no such luxuries as electric cookers for mining families. There were plenty of trees in the area, but on a solid fuel cooking range had little value. So the miners made their own coal-mine in a nearby wood, Walbottle Dene. Very thin seams of poor brown coal had always been known to exist in the Dene and a start was made by odd individuals to exploit it, purely for local domestic use, of course.

A Domestic Mine

My two brawny uncles and myself set out our "claim" in the Dene, breaking into the three-foot seam on the sides of a steep ravine. Roof supports for the tunnel were obtained from the sawn wood from the trees around us. Driving in a pilot heading, and then fanning out further tunnelling to the left and right, providing essential ventilation, was an exhibition of good technical skill in mining engineering.

My uncles needed no lessons in this. They were experts. My role in the venture was haulage; I had a large tin bath which I pushed in ahead of me empty into the heading. With a clothes line attached to the handle, my uncle, hewing the coal, then filled the tin bath with coal. I then dragged the bath back out of the heading. My other uncle at the heading entrance would then empty the coal out of the bath tin into a sack.

When we had obtained sufficient coal for our use, we then discontinued our mining until more coal was needed. We did, of course, provide coal for the less fortunate where we could. The coal was carted away from the heading to the village by cycles—at night time. A tricky operation through the Dene in the dark. The "Specials", too, were very active in stopping and searching anyone carrying anything suspicious. Later in the strike, they clamped down on the "Dene" coal-digging operations; presumably it was far too successful for the liking of authorities directing the crushing of the strike. But stealthily it still went on. I must say, too, that a "Black Market", unwholesome in many respects to the strikers, did develop, but people were in many cases being deprived of necessities. Selling coal could buy food.

Morale Upheld

From the period of the beginning of the General Strike, the local Council of Action had organised morale boosting, social events and these events were carried on in the village long after the General Strike ended. On special days children participated in concerts on waste land; buns and cocoa were distributed. The women excelled in soup kitchen work, various charitable organisations helped.

Sports days were plentiful. Football and cricket matches for men and women as well as walking and running competitions, swimming races in the Tyne (a half a mile away) were skilfully planned and executed. No effort was spared in the pursuit of solidifying the unity of the people, a necessity for victory.

My sister, 19 years of age, still a beautiful woman now at 67, was quite an expert at track and long distance running. Her winning trophies were, fortunately, a parcel of groceries donated by a local grocer. Such local characters as these made splendid contributions of credit to miners during the strike, with really little hope of ever recovering their losses. They never had much themselves to tide

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them over difficult times. No others were employed in the shops but themselves. Most miners remembered them and gave loyal customer support to the end of their lives.

The Means Test

The "Means Test" applied by the "Board of Guardians" at that time was always the subject of bitterness. Then, as now, miners were receiving heavy blows from the press and authority. Shiftlessness on the part of the miner was the main charge laid against him. True, the fantastic lovely summer weather did not give me any incentive to want to resume back-breaking underground toil, but then I had no dependants to keep.

But it was degrading for any family applying for "Guardian" relief. Many did not bother to have the humiliating experience, and refused to join the queue. Union hand-outs to the strikers was already small, and weekly getting less. The miners' leaders worked incessantly to obtain financial support for us, internationally, as well as nationally, but whatever they obtained was shared out among many. Baldwin, the Prime Minister, parried the appeal of our leaders to the USA for financial aid for the miners, by publishing a message to them that there was no hardship or destitution amongst the miners. The miners regarded this as a definite intention of the Government to assist the coal-owners to starve the men back to work.

Evan Williams, coal-owners' representative, said in a meeting with miners' leaders in August, 1926, when they were still searching for an honourable settlement—"I do not know whether, with your recent ecclesiastical associations, you have developed the habit of starting the proceedings with a prayer and a hymn, and I hope you will not find it strange if we do away with it this afternoon, and get straight down to business". This was a reference to Church Bishops' meetings with union leaders trying to find a formula for ending the strike. Typical attitude of contempt and ridicule of the tyrant class, arrogant in their might, merciless in what they felt was to be their victory.

My gentle though rough family, slow to react to cruelty, were enraged. I think they knew the nature of the beast from past experience; this clinched it.

I think also that despite the great hardship experienced, these well-publicised arrogant expressions of overwhelming power against the more helpless, helped greatly to decide the miners, come what may, that they would not submit. As their resources grew less, the miners firmness grew stronger.

Page Arnot correctly states the position in his reference to this period by quoting a few lines from the *Song of the Fight at Malden:*

"Mind shall be harder
Heart the keener
Mood shall be greater
As our might lessens".

Into Radical Politics

A. J. Cook, miners' leader, was regarded as a heroic figure of great stature in our village. His ceaseless campaigning to stem any breach in the wall had a remarkable impact in the struggle. Some say he gave his life for the miners. The Soviet Union had made £1 million donation to the miners, a subject of ridicule and hatred from coal-owners, press and government. I can mark my entry into active radical politics from this period. The example of a naked class confrontation with all allied forces of the Establishment, there for all to see, to crush a section of the community down to semi-starvation level was the final confirmation of what I needed to know of class society. And I had not even read a Marxist sheet! The hand-out of strike pay amounted to 4 shillings a head—half for juniors. Even this meagre sum was the subject of violent attack by government and press. The patient courage shown by the miners was exemplified by the torrent of hatred and abuse showered on them. Lying about supposed stealing and cheating by the miners was commonplace. The picture was complete with the "Specials" strutting around in their scores, watching, searching, overlooking any ordinary action. We experienced the embryo of a Fascist state. And as the strike went on, contributions to the miners grew less, and little as it was, the few shillings a week we had received as strike pay, dried up. It was sorely missed. With rare exceptions, these small sums had been used to buy food.

"Specials" and Blacklegs

Opposite where we lived was a steelworks. For the first three months of the strike, coal had been poured into the smelting yard. Picketing had not succeeded in preventing this; there was a "Special" for every yard of ground. Harassment of the people by these "supermen" could, and did, receive counter-action. Night after night raids on the coal-stocks took place within a 100 yards of where the "Specials" were stationed. Coal wagons were raided on their way to the yard; many of them arrived empty, the drop floor of the wagon expertly released. Some of the men were caught and fined, but most of them were not. This was entirely unorganised, in some ways counter-productive, but who can say that it was any more criminal than the never-ending attempts by authority to starve the miners' families into submission.

A colliery nearby, "Coronation", newly constructed had re-opened, and some of the first blacklegs appeared. In the beginning none of these

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came from our village. Coal was transported from the pit for some two miles by a rope-drawn tubway. The blacklegs at this pit were the scum of Newcastle City. Of no mining experience and without any training, they were guided and coerced by pit officials to produce coal by direction. It needed an army of "Specials" to guard them night and day from the pickets. For the coal to reach its destination at the rail terminals at Lemington, there were many open fields, part woodlands and culverts to pass through.

Obtaining fuel for home use was a difficult problem, and I, along with several other young mates, decided we would, like the Red Indians of old, raid these wagon trains without impeding their progress, fill up our bags with coal from the train (their speed was about 2 miles an hour) and proceed home with the booty. This had been done many times before successfully. The "Specials" rarely knew where to be to meet the many demands made of them; stretching them out over a two-mile area made their job harder. Well, there we were, mid-day, contemptuous of any intervention, eight of us marching in single file, each carrying a sack of coal on our shoulders. All at once a mass surge of police and "Specials" burst through the bushes, pouncing on the nearest. Being at the rear of the file, I had the advantage, dropping my bag and running. I ran like a hare across the ploughed fields but, looking back, there were two uniforms travelling faster, and in a short time I was hooked, taken to the police station and detained, and put in a cell with another lad. Done to frighten us! The gruff sergeant had invited us to promise to go back to work. Idleness, he claimed, was the breeder of crime. After a few hours we were released, but the village was agog with excitement over our confinement.

Our appropriated coal, stored in the police station yard, later disappeared from the yard in the night. And we did not go back to work.

Dealing with a Blackleg

Our first blackleg in the village was a sensation. An ex-sergeant-major of the last war, he always walked about with the arrogance of a ruler. He had little credit as a miner, nor did his usual loud voice give him respect.

What makes a blackleg? They vary in type. What they have in common is a shrinking away from any social responsibility, they can be expert at fawning on the boss, almost serf-like in appreciation of authority.

Our whole village seemed to turn out for the hero's return from his first day's work blacklegging. Marching at the head of what looked like an army of "Specials", it was indeed a spectacle of state might. The blackleg even appeared to be enjoying his glory, pathetic posing under the umbrella of a doubtful kind of protection. He chose his way, he certainly could not expect the manly joy of being recognised as a man of principle. Rather he was treated as one would a snake.

The younger element in the village, having agreed that this blackleg should not enjoy some of the spoils of his traitorous action, decided to extract the concessionary coal delivered to him by a grateful boss. This was done in the middle of the night by the simple unscrewing of his coal-house door hinges, and removing the coal in bags. Daily cat-calling of the man on his return from work must have made his life wretched. Or is their brain specially insulated against such deprecation?

Strains and Stresses

But, back at home, the continuous pressure of trying to provide an adequate meal brought strains and stresses. While the family spirit of togetherness was of a deep character, great hardship could be borne. There were other cases though where ill-health had already existed before any strike had started; where existence had depended for a long time on pittances, these suffered the cruellest blows. A neighbour, in such a plight, cut her throat, but her life was saved by other neighbours. Another chap hanged himself in the yard of the steelworks. These tragedies to people not connected with the mining industry were linked to the strike I believe by the venomous action of local "Boards of Guardians". In hindsight I can see that any unfortunate family could be denied the financial help needed to sustain them, if only to use such cases as proof of what harm the wicked miners were causing to the community.

The House of Commons was also used by the Tory Government as a propaganda platform to denigrate the miners. Though they professed impartiality, for most of the time the issue of why the miners were resisting was buried by vile abuse in debate, endless wailing of our "way of life" being endangered, mixed with threats against the culprits. An honest presentation of the miner's case was howled down as anti-British. Financial aid from any country, particularly the Soviet Union, to the miners was regarded as a hostile act against our country.

Contrast this with the selfless sacrifices of Communists who in their small numbers were working under great strain to obtain solidarity backing for the miners, as well as being deeply involved in obtaining bread from nowhere. Across the river, militants among the miners like Will Lawther, in leading demonstrations of support for the miners, ended up in prison. And in Newcastle a great movement of trade unionists, in existence from the first days of the General Strike, carried on its work in support of the miners.

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But meeting after meeting of Tory Government did take place every month of the strike, bringing out new variations of the original demand that the miners must accept a reduction of wages and an increase in hours. As well as passing a law in Parliament to make an increase in miners' hours of work to be compulsory, the importation of foreign coal was a grave blow to the miners. An approach to the TUC General Council by the miners' leaders failed to get a response. They apparently had decided it best not to be able to recognise the signal of comrades in distress. These were people, who three months before were swearing with both hands on their hearts that they would not for a moment agree to a betrayal of their brothers. The miners never did at any time identify these TUC Council members with the rank and file who were powerless to act in any other way than that directed by their leaders.

The strain of the lock-out was beginning to tell on the whole community. The organised Churches tried to intervene for a settlement. The Government rejected it. Adamant in their determination to break the miners (echoed in the Miners' Strike 1972), differences about proposals by the Miners' Federation to be made to Government showed clearly the changing character of the struggle. Continued deadlock, with the relatively inferior resources that the miners had to hand, was bound in time to reveal the poor position the miners held on which to continue the struggle and win.

But yet in the worst hours it was astonishing to see Miners' Union Branches registering almost unanimous decisions to carry on the struggle. How pitiful the Tory Government and TUC General Council in contrast.

Soviet Solidarity

By September, the USSR and their Trades Unions had agreed to 1 per cent of their members' wages going as a contribution to our lads in struggle. What jubilation in our ranks this caused.

I have often found it difficult to understand why miners ever allowed themselves to be used in anti-Soviet diatribes during and before the cold-war period. Here was a powerful friend, little to give, but actually prepared to give of that little to help their class brothers far away.

The action was heart-warming. My family described it in glowing terms. Everyone called it fondly "Russian money", as distinct from any other aid from other quarters.

Cracks in the Front

The last seven weeks of the struggle presented more problems. The hard core of the men still battled on daily to maintain a high level of conscious activity, picketing, food kitchens, keeping open lines of communication from leading level of the Union to Branch and village level. But against all these valiant efforts, cracks were appearing on the face of the unity previously maintained. By the end of September 81,000 had gone back to work, led, of course, by bosses' stooges like Spencer of Derbyshire. Yet still by October 6 the miners could still vote by 737,000 to 42,000 against acceptance of the Government's variegated proposals for ending the strike. The strike-breaking activities of G. A. Spencer, Labour MP in Nottingham, was a terrible blow. I believe the sowing of the seeds of impending disaster for the miners if the strike continued, was a deliberate attempt to split the ranks and leave the hard core remnants to suffer further brutal Government assault. In Northumberland and Durham this man represented in his attitude something akin to a sewer.

Trickle Back to Work

There was, of course, as strike funds dried up, a growing number of men returning to work. It was not serious in our village, but not all the village worked in the pits. One of my own firm friends, young, vital, and naturally loving the bright lights went back to work. He was not a rat; the sheer boredom of non-preoccupation with the pit that at least gave him, as a single man, a reasonable social life, was denied him, coupled with family pressures and (father a non-miner) all this finally caused him to make the break. It was a deep, sad blow to me. He was blacklisted from our home for ever. Many more young people were attracted back by the apparent hopelessness. Our family stuck to their guns. I believe many more were influenced by their decisions. By November, the majority of miners were still standing firm, but a quarter of the work force, nearly a quarter of a million had gone back to work. The Government now offered what they thought were reasonable terms as conquerors:

(*a*) Immediate resumption of work.

(*b*) Longer hours to be discussed at district level.

(*c*) "*Temporarily*" rates of pay at pre-strike level (but conditional on acceptance of longer hours).

(*d*) No guarantee against victimisation, etc.

Not surprising, after these humiliating terms were referred by the Miners' Executive to the districts, they were rejected. The end, we knew though, was near. On November 29, it was all over. The lockout had lasted seven months, and things would never be the same again. The bitter hatred of the miners against the Tories was deep indeed, and has continued until today. This is reflected in the almost obsessional desire in every miner's family to vote Labour in every mining village. The fact that the

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few Labour Governments since 1926 have betrayed the ideals set in the minds of the miners by the Socialist Pioneers, does not allow a miner to forget the maniacal enemy of 1926. Easy to forgive wrongs done to themselves, our lads know of the tortures inflicted on their innocent families, and it will never be forgotten.

Blacklisted but Still in Struggle

Our pit was by this time completely manned by blacklegs, most of them from other parts of Britain. None of my family were accepted when they presented themselves for work. The blacklist was thoroughly operated, no mercy was shown, nor even expected by the miner from the coal-owner. Yet the locked-out men were rated among the most highly qualified, conscientious pitmen in Britain. Conversely, the men who had returned to work during the lock-out forming the basis of the new man-power in the industry, were largely raw, limited in conception of struggle against geological conditions in the primitive mining existing then.

Their productive results were not outstanding, so that over a period of a few months after the end of the strike, managements were coming to see the necessity of little by little re-employing the old hands, but not at the pits they worked at prior to the strike.

I finally got a job at a pit near Blaydon across the river from where we lived—called "Stargate". Appalling conditions, water coming through the roof in cascades. Earning power in the circumstances was poor. My uncles had similar problems where they had finally got a job, and in 1928 we left the North for the new Yorkshire coalfields, where we joined, at a new Thorne Colliery, hundreds of colliers from other areas of Britain, victims of blacklisting.

This pit later proved to be one of the most militant in Britain (closed now), symbolic of the dauntless spirit of men driven from their homeland, but who never forgot the lessons of struggle against the class enemy.

The Role of the Individual in Art

Jack Lindsay

(This article is based on a paper read to the Communist University in July 1974)

There are a number of angles from which this question can be approached. There is the whole problem of just what constitutes individuality; the ideas, illusory or realistic, that are held about it; what is its nature and its function; how far individuality in one sort of society differs from that in another sort and so on.

It is clear that individuality is to some degree socially formed and directed, and that it also holds given elements, heredity, the organism of the person concerned. But any quantitative assessment of the elements involved is obviously impossible. Heredity itself or innate factors must involve an endless series of social as well as biological ingredients and influences. The one thing that is plain is that out of the mixture, itself ceaselessly modified from the first moment, there emerges the particular or unique identity of the individual, interrelated as that identity is with countless others.

The role of the individual in art cannot be separated from his role in other matters. In the early days of Marxism Plekhanov wrote his essay on *The Role of the Individual in History*. As the title shows, he was mainly concerned with the outstanding individual who plays, or seems to play, a leading or commanding role in social and political development. If Napoleon hadn't been there, some other military leader would have come up, who would have carried out the same general function in directing forces born from the French Revolution against the antiquated feudal structures impeding European development—though the details of what happened, and so many of the incidental consequences, would have been different—and so on.

In general we may accept this position and say that major forces in history will always find someone to embody and advance them; and we may claim that the same is true of art. (In speaking of art in this essay I shall mainly have the pictorial and plastic arts in mind, though what

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I say will be relevant to the others, at times with a slight variation of terms, and I will use examples from any form of self-expression.)

The General Trend

In art, then, we might say that at any given time there is a general trend, which can be related to the social and economic bases of the period; and this trend will suit a certain kind of artist, who is then enabled to play a leading part in the situation. For instance, the trend towards abstraction that emerged from about 1900 on was basically linked with the growth of imperialism. It revealed and expressed the dehumanising or alienating forces of capitalism as they reached a certain level of intensity. Abstract art thus expresses the death or elimination of man in a mechanistic world, where the fragmentation of labour is reaching an extreme point.

But though this generalisation may be true—and I would hold that it is—we cannot employ it crudely and mechanically when dealing with individual cases. A poet or artist may appear who grasps the human condition deeply enough to resist the general trend, to do his best to invert or reverse it. Thus Blake came up in a world of neo-classic canons and Augustan norms, but fought them all along the line and defined a consciousness of history which was at total odds with all the dominant ideas.

Or to come back to the question of abstraction. Cézanne is generally claimed as the father of cubism and conscious abstraction; but if we look closely at the direction of his work, we see that he was in fact both aware of abstracting tendencies and doing his utmost to overcome them. He was struggling to use his analysis of plane-relations, of the dynamic relation of one colour-plane to another, for the purpose of what he called the *grande réalisation,* the reintegration of man in the universe.

Still, the fact that it was an intellectualised version of his structures which primarily influenced later painters, might be adduced to prove the point that the general trend, born out of the society of alienation and intensified exploitation, was what dictated the forms under which artists were aware of the issues. The general art-stream has yet to pick up the struggle for integration from the point where Cézanne left it. Picasso, who more than anyone else incarnates the next phase of development, shows in his work a ceaseless and very complex series of submissions to the disintegrating forces together with attempts to find points of fresh integration at each phase of the struggle. And yet over all there goes as a general trend the movement to abstraction, finding its final expression in any form of gimmicky manipulation.

So in the significant artists of our own epoch we find, one way or another, a control exercised by the general trend, born from capitalist decay, and resistance to that control, an effort to reverse or transform it. Where does the individual role reveal itself? It would be far too simple to say that the elements of submission to the general trend reveal the impact from without, from society, and those of resistance reveal the creative individual. For in fact the elements of resistance have their social correlations as much as the submission; they are linked with the elements of concrete labour-process in the situation, with the resistances of the workers to dehumanisation, with the whole struggle for socialism—even if the artist himself is only dimly aware, or not aware at all, of the full nature of the social forces playing on him.

The originality or individuality of the artist emerges indeed out of the total situation, his total response to it—and that response will include, in varying degrees of mixture, elements from all the most significant aspects of the social movement and struggle.

The Abstracting Trend

Perhaps it would be useful to turn from this point to a consideration of the prevalent ideas about individuality in the art-situation today. What I have called the trend to abstraction is itself a complex matter, involving more than the post-Cubist or post-Mondrian trends. At core it means the abandonment of the attempt to create totalities, integrations of man and the world. So all the various elements, which in the tradition were seen as aspects of a unity greater than any one of them, are now taken in separation. Colours, planes, volumes, structures, patterns, forms, and so on were still seen in Cézanne's concept of the Great Realisation as all playing their part in a system of hierarchies contributing to the total effect, which in turn was a human effect, whether it defined the relation of man to man, or of man to nature.

The abstracting trend means the taking of one or another of the many aspects or elements that go to make the integrated form, and treating it in *isolation.* Thus, Expressionism, with its stress on an unmediated emotional response, was as much a part of the general trend as was Cubism and or the later extreme abstractions and pattern-makings. Out of both the trends, those towards expressionist explosions, or those towards abstract patterning or colour-oppositions, there has emerged a concept of artistic individuality as something existent in itself, detached

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from the struggle for fully human definition, which, with varying success, has dominated in the past. Any form of integration is seen as an imposition from without—because the artist has detached himself from such art-process and thus feels it as something threatening his virginly spontaneous individuality.

All that is essentially a nihilist anarchist position, which emotionally gains force from feeling itself in opposition to authority, to an outer and imposed system of order. In fact, however, it reposes on a rejection of the ordering and organising forces that create humanity.

Mystical Concept of Individuality

There is ultimately a mystical concept of individuality, of the individual's role, as existing in a realm of pure freedom. So far from being revolutionary it reveals itself as the final reflection of bourgeois egoism. We may not agree with all Christopher Caudwell's analysis and method, but he has effectively enough shown the Bourgeois Illusion to be the concept of Individualism as Freedom; has shown that this illusion is an aspect of the wider phenomenon of commodity-fetichism, which reduces social relationships between men to proprietary relations between men and things. Individuality is a kind of unique property of the individual, a given *thing*.

So we find the idea of society, not as a complex of positive and negative, integrative and disintegrative forces, but as a repressive totality, which has managed to veil or tie up the individuality of the artist. The problem is just to untie or let loose that individuality, and it is assumed that the result can only be a valuable and significant expression. Hence the wide notion of art as a spontaneous activity; divorced from tradition and craft, from the complex struggle that unites man with his fellows and with nature. Everyone has a sort of hidden *complete self*, which he has only to release; the self is not *something that has to be formed* in difficult and entangled effort.

These fantasies have of course a much wider circulation than merely in the artworld; they underlie a major part of what has been called youth culture, the playpower movement, and so on. They underlie a large portion of the ideas about sex, preaching in fact a regression to what Freud called polymorphous infantile sexuality—anything to get away from the integrative struggle which is now identified with repression.

The idea of individuality as a sort of unique possession, an absolute thing, central in most modernist art—theory and practice, thus has an effect in all spheres of contemporary life—enabling the exponent to masquerade as a revolutionary while he is in fact expressing an extreme form of bourgeois nihilism, an extreme crystallisation of the bourgeois illusion of isolated individuality as freedom.

A Nihilist Outlook

But as I have said of the link between expressionist theories of spontaneity and abstractionist theories of forms or colours unrelated to real existences—we inevitably find as a component of the nihilist outlook both theories of pure spontaneity (or regression to infantile levels) and theories of expression in which the human being with his rich complex of desires, impulses, resolves, and aspirations is quite eliminated. Take this passage from Neville's *Playpower*:

> One of the more devoted pioneers of creation by chance has been John Cage, whose extensive efforts *not* to compose his own compositions, are legendary. He has made a science of the elimination of self, allowing the inspiration for the sounds he produced to depend upon such things as imperfections in the paper used, the toss of a coin, the weather or whatever happens to be on the local radio station during the concert. Cage has said: "The whole idea of chance operations is that the field of awareness that's now open to us is so big that if we are not careful we'll just go to certain points in it, points with which we're already familiar. By using chance operations, we can get to points with which we are unfamiliar."
>
> Jean Tinguely has encouraged accidental events to consist in the construction of his humanoid machines which in themselves can create a drawing, a play, a tune, or a poem. Because of the complexity of the random factors, repetition is near impossible. Machines can create in the purest sense, untroubled by distracting human emotions.

So we see how the other side of the concept of pure and free spontaneous individuality is the concept of complete determination by external and random events. Reacting against the machine, against imposed systems of order, the rebel ends by taking the machine as the pure exemplar of free creation—something untroubled by distracting human emotions. We see then where the idea of the individual as the sole factor or the supremely dominant factor in art-creation leads us. To nihilism, chaos, infantile repression, or sheer mechanism.

Clearly such attitudes, whatever the ultra-revolutionary terms in which they are set out, can only deter or prevent the artist from playing a part in any collective effort—apart from a collective of random atoms all obeying their own laws of indeterminacy. That of course is

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what we would expect of positions that reflect bourgeois egoism, the bourgeois illusion, in its last phases of decay.

Loss of the Craft Element

There is another point I would like to make in connection with the phoney anarchist concept of the individual as having a ready-made source of spontaneous power which he only has to tap. It has meant the steady loss and undervaluation of the craft element in art. The beginnings of this, from a social viewpoint, go back to the eighteenth century, when the artist resented being ranked as a craftsman and aspired to the status of gentleman. This development was linked with the growth of academies, generally under royal patronage, in place of old guild systems of apprenticeship. During the nineteenth century the artist who could please the bourgeois patrons became a rich man accepted as the equal of those patrons. The craft-element was still there, but related more and more to the money-making respectabilisation of art.

We find the rebels opposed to the academies and often looking back to the old kind of craft-basis. Hogarth fought hard against the trend leading to the R.A. in 1760s. David came rather out of the old guild-world. Courbet fought the academies and called himself *master-painter*, a craft-term, rejecting the term *artist*. So rebels like Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, tended to have little or no connection with the teaching establishments. But this did not mean that they despised or neglected the craft-basis of art. On the contrary. They sought with the utmost devotion and strenuousness to find the craft-basis that harmonised with their aesthetic ideas and aims.

But because they rejected conventional teaching it was easy to assume that the creative rebel found his own way forward just because he was a rebel and rejected the conventional ways. The stress was put on the rejection and not on the hard struggle to find alternative craft-methods which enabled the artist to express his true sensibility and not surrender to conventional systems. So what I have called the phoney-interpretation of the situation sees creative release as the rejection of all existing systems, which include craft-skills and their traditions, and puts all its money on the act of rebellion itself which is assumed to achieve the desired creativity by its own inner force alone. One can see the analogy with anarchist political ideas, which assume that the breaking-down of oppressive forms will somehow automatically create a state of freedom and a new unoppressive social system.

As I was writing this yesterday I noted in the *Listener* Roy Fuller commenting, "Like most arts today, pottery has been bedevilled by the trendy hatred of skill and tradition, both often conceived as belonging to the outmoded art of the bourgeoisie." That is, because one kind of skill is correctly enough identified with the bourgeois public, skill itself is rejected; the craft-basis is rejected; and it is assumed that the lack of technique and a craft-basis is the guarantee of originality, sincerity, freedom from bourgeois pressures. In fact, as we have seen, it is a surrender to the most lost and demoralised of bourgeois positions.

The Example of McLuhan

A typical example of the sort of confusions that result from such positions is to be found in the thought of McLuhan. He has denounced the book as a false vehicle of culture, correctly linking its use and expansion with the rise of the bourgeoisie. It is valid enough to discuss the ways in which book-culture has reinforced the self-isolating and alienating trends of bourgeois society. But to make a simple identification of book and bourgeoisie is to show that one cannot oneself resist the reductive methods of bourgeois thought which one is supposed to be attacking. The way in which the spontaneity-thesis insensibly slides off into the thesis of sheer mechanism is well brought out by the way in which, amid the denunciations of bourgeois technology, McLuhan turns to the glorification of the most mechanistic forms of the technological revolution. As Jonathan Miller says:

> He sees the most recent developments in electronic technology as offering a Godsent escape from the slavery exerted by wheels and levers. For in a somewhat confused way he has identified the circuits of the electrical engineer with those of the human nervous system itself, and invites us to acknowledge through TV and radio that we have given ourselves the opportunity of communicating with one another through media that can reproduce the plural simultaneity of thought itself. Through these media images and sounds can be flashed upon the attentive mind with telepathic speed; and since the various mechanisms can be linked in a vast network, electronic man has reconvened the tribal village on a global scale.

Thus the demand for an organic outlook ends in the most abject mechanism. Television, which more than any other medium of communication, reduces the world to a shadowy existence "out there", and deepens the split between the passive watcher and the lost otherself projected into the

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ground of its technical or mechanistic form.

A more sophisticated version of the "message is the media" was put out by Benjamin before the war, but with the same mechanistic flaw. The idiom and outlook has entered into rebellious youth-culture as the idea that total revolution means cybernetics plus the tribal or palaeolithic village. Thus a manifesto runs: "The underground press is papers, and papers are the media of our whole lives. We have to come together, people, build to a gathering, or else. Or else you are dead, and gone. The underground press will bring you back to your sense from wherever you have been taken to hide....They are a working model of the new palaeo-cybernetic culture in action. The underground press is the revolution in all its implications. There is no separation. Everything is everything."

Estrangement of the Senses

I could go on indefinitely exemplifying this sort of thing. A false concept of the individual role leads to a false concept of the collective. To sum up, I'd like to cite a passage from Meszaros, who is considering the way in which our culture represents what Marx defined as the ultimate trend of alienation: "the sheer estrangement of all the senses—the sense of *having*." The reduction of the senses to things, things we own, not living aspects of process:

> If the complex social inter-relatedness of the particular senses is disrupted by the "crude solitariness" of egoistic self-gratification, this means inevitably that enjoyment itself loses its general human significance—ceases to be *human* enjoyment, by becoming mere self-satisfaction of the isolated individual—and its level sinks into crude *immediacy* to which no *standard* can be applied.

I might interrupt here to say that the sort of analysis I have been making and which one finds in Meszaros explains why voyeurism in the name of sexual liberation has become central in our decadent culture. From Joyce and Proust on, it entered into the key-art of the period and has now irrupted as a general characteristic. The onanistic voyeur, not the participant, is our typical figure.

To continue with Meszaros:

> Significantly enough, this development goes hand in hand with a general crisis of aesthetic values and standards. And no wonder. For if the general significance of human enjoyment is replaced by the crude immediacy of private self-gratification, there can be no *common measure* or standard of evaluation. Its place is taken by a superficial description of the mechanical constituents and responses of the given process, or by a pretentious and often irrational monologue of introspection concerning one's own isolated "aesthetic experience".
>
> They are both astronomical distances away even from the preconditions of aesthetic evaluation. The two observed phenomena—the impoverishment of the senses and of their gratification on the one hand, and the endless attacks on the objectivity of aesthetic standards and values on the other—are thus closely interlinked.

Well, after all this sort of analysis we are still left with the problem of what constitutes genuine individuality in art. Indeed it is much easier to demolish the false concept, which by its nature exists in a sort of rigid isolation, than to define the positive concept, where one is dealing with the life-process in all its complexity.

True Individuality in Art

One might say in fact that true individuality is that which grows and deepens by the *more* of life it takes inside itself, while the phoney version is either obliterated by life and tradition in their great range and weight, or withdraws to play about with some selected fragments. Truly individual expression will include a great deal of analytic thought, both with regards to methods used and the craft-tradition within the discipline; and also with regards to the human situation in which the artist finds himself, the aspects which he feels impelled to define. But analytic thought and general understanding of the material and method will not alone produce a work of art. This point, perhaps, needs to be stressed in a Marxist discussion; for too often a Marxist analysis of a work has dealt wholly or almost wholly with its sociological content and political moral—as can be seen in a great deal of Soviet criticism—plus an attempt to palliate things by some added comments on force of style, sympathy with people, and so on.

The sociological analysis, of course, is not irrelevant. It has its own importance in helping us to understand much of what has gone to form the artist and his aims, the angles from which he attacks his themes, his limitations of outlook as well as his positive qualities, and so on. But when it has said its last word, it still has not explained the work of art.

For instance, there is an interesting essay by Lukacs on *Les Paysans* of Balzac. It shows how thoroughly, even minutely, Balzac has grasped the social position of the peasants in post-revolutionary France—their inner conflicts and the forces at play on them. This helps us to understand Balzac's remarkable analytic grasp of his material, and from one angle it provides a necessary illumination of the way in which

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the social forces are taken apart and articulated in the novel. But it hardly at all explains how the novel is different from, say, a long essay by Marx on the situation.

Concrete Presentation of People

Balzac could not have written the novel without his deep social analysis and insight; but what differentiates the novel from any purely analytic work is the concrete presentation of people. And that presentation involves the intuitive or imaginative grasp of people as living entities; a part of their environment, yet each making up a vital unity full of contradictions and conflicts as well as embodying some dominant social force. Each of them having his own relation to productive process, an active implicated relation or an exploiting one—or a mixture of the two—and so in turn his own relation to nature. The vital unity of the individual definition, the image, in art is thus always sensuous as well as social. And it is the fullness of sensuous existence in the artist himself that provides the living quality of particular existence in his images or characters, in his whole method of expression.

The point becomes even clearer if we turn to a painter, such as Cézanne. He could have written endless essays on the need for dynamic colour-planes, or he could even have made endless experiments in abstract colour-relations, but he would not in the least have achieved the art-image which integrates our whole experience of time-space in a new way. Here the direct sensuous impact is obvious and central, however much analytic thought has gone into the development of his method for tackling the problem.

In a sense we might build a bridge between the sociological approach and the fuller one that compasses the aesthetic fact, if the former concerned itself not only with the direct social, economic, and political forces revealed in the art-definition, but also went into the whole tradition of the discipline that the artist uses—its technical methods as well as its iconographical systems. For these too are socially inherited and absorbed; and it is in the way that the artist uses them that his particular sensuous essence is released and embodied in the form, the image—and that his specific individual character is communicated.

Sensibility and Social Consciousness

In making these comments I must not be taken as opposing sensibility or sensuous intuition to social consciousness. The senses as well as the mind in man are socially formed. It has recently been argued that sex itself, which is generally looked on as an instinctive force asserting itself despite social controls, is in human beings essentially a cultural creation, both in its intensities and in the directions it takes; and this claim I think to be more or less true. Such a position, which incidentally makes nonsense of a great deal of Freud with his opposition of instinct and civilisation and his theory of repression, also undermines the modernist ideas of spontaneity and its link with infantile unintegrated sexuality.

But because we may reject the idea of the senses as having a mysterious life of their own, apart from the alien and interfering mind, that does not mean that we are belittling the importance of sensuous existence. On the contrary. If a person without a mind is a mere chaos, a person without senses is a ghost. In creative activity the dialectical unity of mind and sense is continually raised to a new level. A new concentration of the life-force is achieved, in which an enhanced intensity of living is merged with a fuller comprehension of relationships.

In this sense the signature of true individuality in a work of art lies in the organic nature of that work—the way in which its intellectual and moral definition is fused with a sensuously apprehended world of people and nature.

The originality or individuality of the work of art reveals the individual who has created it. But if the work of art is marked by a special intensity in the fusion of intellectual, moral, and sensuous elements, that kind of fusion is characteristic of all experience in which the human norms are upheld—just as it is denied and broken down in all experience which is anti-human, which advances exploitation, division and fragmentation, the alienating cash-nexus as the bond between man and man.

A Normal Human Activity

Now this point brings us up against the limitation in all thinking about art which treats it as a special sort of activity, and the artist as a special sort of person. Art should be normal human activity, even if at certain moments, in certain hands, it gains an unusual intensity and significance. This point, which should be apparent and central to Marxists, has been properly realised, as far as I know, only by William Morris—though it is everywhere implied in Marx's thought.

We are submitting to the distorting limitations of class-thought, especially of bourgeois thought, when we consider the artist as a special sort of individual, with a psychology and system of work that apply to him alone. Every man and woman has his or her sensuous essence; and a central issue for human liberation is the creative release of this essence in all activity—that is, the build-

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ing of the whole or allround man in whom senses, mind, and moral impulse are truly dynamically unified.

On the other hand, the core of alienation, the effect of the inner divisions in human beings brought about by class society, is the withering and impoverishment of the sensuous being, together with a failure to grasp and understand the social whole in which the individual is embedded. As Marx put it in his early mss, the senses are cut off from the alienated individual, turned into external things, then reunited with him in a degraded form, as something animal, separated from his human nature and opposed to it instead of representing its richest form of expression and fulfilment. Again and again he sets out this viewpoint and stresses the need for a full sensuous liberation in the unalienated man.

We see then that the artist, in whatever form he expresses himself—words, shapes, colours, sounds—is successful to the extent that he regains and defines his senses as human faculties. In doing so he regains a true dialectical relation to nature, and Marx seeks to bring out what that implies, by defining a truly human society as "the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both brought to fulfilment"—in effect "a true resurrection of nature."

It follows that the artist *qua* artist is nearer to this truly human condition than others, and that the condition to which all men should aspire is that of the artist. But in bourgeois society, we saw, the artist is and can only be an exceptional being. To the extent that he is successful he points the way to forms of living which should be universal. Those forms will result, not by every person in a bourgeois society trying to be an artist, but by the social revolution that ends alienation or rather makes its ending possible. Not by everyone in a socialist society trying to be an artist in the bourgeois sense of the term, but by the members of that society setting before him the ending of the old divisions between work and art, work and life.

Art and Work

That is where we come back to William Morris and the socialist application he made of the positions of Ruskin that in a human society work would be the supreme pleasure and fulfilment; that work in such a situation would be inseparable from art; that the shaping powers which were brought to a fine (and limited) point of concentration by the artist in bourgeois society would in a world of freedom and brotherhood pervade life and manifest themselves at all points of activity and expression.

So we cannot treat the individual role in art as a matter of a given and constant ratio. The social content is always there, whether consciously realised or denied and veiled; but the way in which it functions varies enormously according to the social situation in which the artist finds himself. In a free society where the split between work and art has been ended or is in process of being ended, the role of the individual artist would be quite different than it is in our world.

If we look back to primitive tribal life we find that the arts are generally diffused and are indissolubly merged with productive activity in the sort of way that Morris wanted. But that does not mean that the individual has not his special contribution to make. Everyone can sing or make up songs, but some can do it better than others, and so on. Among the Australian natives we find the corroboree, the moment of large-scale release of the art-impulse, bringing together all sorts of decorations, dances, songs and ritual-mimes which express the central ideas of the group about itself and its place in nature. While there are many traditional elements, there are yet devisers of corroborees in the same sense as there is a composer of an opera. We may hazard the conjecture that in a communist society much the same sort of principle would hold—of course in a more complex way. Some persons would be more talented in one form of expression or another, but practically everyone would share in art-activity, and that activity would have changed its nature from the forms that prevail in a class-society, and would extend itself to break down the divisions of work and leisure, labour-process and art.

The person who shows the greater power in devising and organising the corroboree is normally the witchdoctor or shaman, who at this phase combines much of the functions later distributed among poet, doctor, scientist, priest (repository of the traditional lore of the group).

As the tribal systems break up, the shaman tends to take more and more the role of leader in all these aspects (the war-chief is quite a different character). He takes over much of the group-rituals and carries them out in complex dance-song-mime performances all on his own, especially assuming the role of leader and guide into the unknown, eg in death-rites where he convoys the spirit through various ordeals, tests, trials. He thus gathers the spiritual strength and the organising systems which in time emerge as developed art and science.

I have made these points because I feel that a Marxist cannot treat the role of the individual in art without bringing out the extreme limitations of the whole concept of art in a class-society, and the different ways in which the relation of

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individual to art-process could not but be regarded in a communist world. Socialism as the transitional period between class-society and communism should have these points always in mind and should be seeking to find how far the new unity can be achieved at each phase of forward movement.

Marx, Morris and the Socialist Countries

It seems to me that Marx and Morris have been the only two Marxists who have fully understood and propounded this issue, and that the existing socialist societies have only very partially grasped it. To the extent of course that facilities for workers to practise forms of art in their spare time are provided, more adequate education in such matters, extended chances for all sorts of amateur activities, there is a decided change for the better, but it is not enough. To the extent that the sense of exploitation in work is lessened or ended, the worker is able to begin enjoying his work in a new way and to gain satisfaction from his achievements. But we are still a long way from the positions of Marx and Morris, which presuppose a consistent and continuous effort to make people aware of all that is at stake in breaking down élite attitudes and the old forms of division: division of labour as well as division of classes.

From Marx's viewpoint the inner movement of socialism meant a continual and conscious struggle to eliminate the division and fragmentation of labour, division of country and town, division of hand and mind, the general development of automation, and the ending of commodity-production. In this struggle was implicated the liberation of the human senses in a fully creative way. Communism in society meant "senses affirming themselves as essential powers of man." That is, the full liberation of the individual in self-expression.

Unfortunately, if we look at the Soviet Union, we find that as the peasant-bases have gone and industrial cities become extended there has been a considerable backward movement. Statistics are not easily available; but from the inquiries made at Taganrog as a typical industrial city it is clear that increasing passivity has come about. Only a very small percentage of workers take any active role even in sport; there has been a retreat in all ways to a private existence and the TV screen. More leisure has made things worse, leading only to a search for odd jobs to make more money or to further absorption in the home. There is certainly no need for this trend; but clearly the development of a consumer-society inside socialism means that there must be all-out effort to stimulate social activity and interest by an intensification of Leninist democracy at root-levels.

In China the situation seems different. The healthy stress on egalitarian positions has tended to break down many divisions; but there seems an almost total lack of popular traditions in art or literature on which to build. Hence the extreme poverty of the "revolutionary artforms" which tend in fact to be almost parodies of the weakest aspects of Soviet forms. Hence, too, the fear of the past, through the lack of popular elements there to turn to, which makes Confucianism such an undiluted force in the tradition. In the universities there is fear of using, say, the French classics for students of French; the little exemplary tales of peasant heroes are translated into French and the students translate them back again. Hence too denunciations of Beethoven and so on. No doubt these difficulties will be overcome, and China is so vast and various in many ways that one hesitates to generalise; but it is certainly a fact that Chinese culture over the millenia shows very little of the continual upsurges from popular levels into the upper ones, which has so richly fertilised European culture, and this fact must create special problems and ways of tackling the issue.

A Many-Sided Approach

It seems to me then that in our attitude to art we need a *many-sided approach,* never forgetting the political aspects but at the same time not getting them out of the full human focus. Struggle it is true may involve many hardships and sufferings, but men imbued with the socialist idea accept such deprivations in the name always of a greater happiness and enjoyment for mankind. Our art may deal with tragic and terrible things, but the idea and experience of joy must always be present—and that means the full implication of the senses as well as of the mind and the will.

I should like here to cite the Manifesto issued by Siqueiros in 1922 in Mexico when he organised the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors. The Syndicate was concerned with questions of pay and conditions of work—but in terms of a grand perspective. There are touches of sectarianism and narrowness, I think, but the main concept is deeply right:

> Social, Political and Aesthetic Declaration from the Syndicate of Technical Workers to the native races humiliated through centuries; to the soldiers converted into hangmen by their chiefs; to the workers and peasants who are oppressed by the rich; and to intellectuals who are not servile to the bourgeoisie.
>
> Not only noble labour but even the smallest

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> manifestation of material and spiritual vitality of our race spring from our native midst. Its admirable, exceptional and peculiar ability to create beauty is the highest and greatest spiritual expression, which constitutes our most valid heritage. It is great because it surges from the people; it is collective, and our own aesthetic aim is to socialise artistic expression.
>
> We repudiate so-called easel painting and all such art which springs from ultra intellectual circles, for it is essentially aristocratic.
>
> We hail monumental expression, because such art is public property.
>
> Our supreme objective in art, which is today an expression of individual pleasure, is to create beauty for all.

I cite this, in part because the Mexican art movement set off by Siqueiros, Rivera, Orozco and others has been the one art movement of our period which achieved great art consistently on the basis of a popular tradition. In Mexico, still largely a peasant country, the link of work—mainly craftwork—and art could be assumed—the direct link of creative impulse and the life and work of the people.

There are sectarian touches as I said. Easel painting has indeed been very much the form employed by the cut-off artist with whom I began my talk—but that does not mean the form should be simply abolished. We have only to think of uses made of it from Hogarth and Goya to Courbet and Cézanne to see that its function has not simply been aristocratic. Indeed Rivera never gave it up. At the same time I should like to point out that already with Hogarth, the first modern painter with a popular basis, truly we meet the demand for public use of painting and the denunciation of portraits as a surrender on the artist's part to commercialisation. The call for social and monumental forms, which was also made by Courbet, in turn links with the positions of Ruskin and Morris, which saw in the medieval epoch the last great period of popular art through large-scale works like the cathedrals in which craft and art, technology and art, a comprehensive world view and deep emotion, were drawn vitally together. Finally I should like to draw attention to the stress on *beauty;* for in such a context beauty means the full liberation of the sensuous essences—a meaning lost to us through the contamination of the term with neo-classic canons and academic conventions. When Keats said Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty—he was uttering his idea of an art which combined intellectual and social truth with sensuous fullness—stressing that in the vital union one aspect merged inseparably with the other.

In medieval art as in the art of Siqueiros' Mexico the opposition and conflict of truth and beauty, of intellectual and moral purpose and sensuous enjoyment has been overcome. The opposition and conflict of individual and collective has been overcome; for the individual can experience the utmost pleasure in the forms he is creating and yet feel that he is serving his deepest moral need and achieving union with his fellows.

Wide Range of Tolerances

The problem however is not so easily solved with us in general. With Mexico too the moment of union between the peasant and the revolutionary forces was soon ended; and no doubt the issues cannot come up even there again in quite such a simple and assured form. But that does not mean that we can afford to pause from trying to solve the problem in the forms best available to us at any given moment. What we need above all is as wide as possible a range of tolerances and readinesses to experiment, or to use any or every form, stressing wherever possible the element of participation.

This means that the artist with a socialist consciousness can and should use any of the given forms from architecture to easel painting, from the novel to the lyric poem, from the symphony to the song, in which he feels that he can effectively express himself and his world-view —and that at the same time we should encourage all the more direct forms, agitprop, declamation, street-corner drama, poetry in pubs, pop art, pop music, folk song groups, the use of mime or symbolism in demos and so on. What we must resist is the effort of any particular form to assert itself as the one and only true socialist or revolutionary art, or to insist on some sort of sloganised moral as the hallmark of authenticity.

We can thus begin to use art in a broad way for mobilising revolutionary emotion without oversimplifying or distorting what is the true nature and function of art. After all there is even some value, indeed a very great value, in the discovery by anyone that he can find delight and release in some sort of self-expression, any sort. For that brings him up against the limits that any class society puts on happiness and self-fulfilment. The discovery that there can be pleasure in work, in craft, is one of the great roots of wisdom, as we have seen, and anyone who persists in the idea cannot but become the opponent of our class society.

It all helps, any gesture in the right direction. The painter Josef Herman told me recently that he long past gave up signing his paintings or

(*Completed on p. 133*)

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